

# **A Quranic Commentary: The Way of Noble Character**

**Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa**

**Verse 1 to**

**Chapter 50 Qaf**

**Verse 45**

**PodTafseer - Vol 12**



**Achieve Noble Character**

**A Quranic Commentary: The Way of Noble Character –  
Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, Verse 1 to Chapter 50 Qaf, Verse 45.**

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A Quranic Commentary: The Way of Noble Character – Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, Verse 1 to Chapter 50 Qaf, Verse 45.

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All praise to Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds and endless blessings and peace by 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](mailto:ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com).

## Introduction

The following is a detailed commentary (Tafseer) on Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, Verse 1 to Chapter 50 Qaf, Verse 45 of the Holy Quran. It specifically discusses the good characteristics Muslims must adopt and the bad characteristics they must avoid in order 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.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verses 1-2



حَمَّ



عَسَقَّ

“Hā, Meem.

Ayn, Seen, Qāf.”

**“Ḥā, Meem. Ayn, Seen, Qāf.”**

Even though the actual meaning of these verses found within the Holy Quran are unknown using letters from the alphabet does indicate the importance of education and knowledge.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verses 3-5

كَذَلِكَ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكَ اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣﴾

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٤﴾

تَكَادُ السَّمَوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِنَّ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُونَ  
بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِمَن فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ  
الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥﴾

*“Thus has He revealed to you and to those before you - Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.*

*To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and He is the Most High, the Most Great.*

*The heavens almost break from above them, and the angels exalt [Allah] with praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on earth. Unquestionably, it is Allah who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”*

***“Thus has He revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and to those before you...”***

The purpose of sending the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, with divine revelation is for them to be sincerely obeyed and followed.

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

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

***“Allāh, the Exalted in Might...The heavens almost break from above them...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who over powers all things, who in reality is the only One who possesses power and might. Anyone else who possesses strength only does so because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. There is no atom in this world or in the next that can escape the power and authority of Allah, the Exalted.

As all power belongs to Allah, the Exalted, a muslim should therefore always remember that the strength to perform righteous deeds and refrain from sins comes from Allah, the Exalted, alone. This will remove any chance of pride creeping into their heart. An atom's worth of which is enough to take a person to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Whoever desires for their faith to become mighty must obey the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be granted strong faith which will aid them to overcome all difficulties so that they leave this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. True obedience only lies in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. 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.”*

Truly Knowing Allah, the Exalted, is All Mighty should prevent a muslim from sinning. As they should know there is no way to escape the might of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, when a muslim engraves this divine name into their heart it prevents them from committing oppression and wronging others. They become fully aware that even if there is no person powerful enough to seek justice from them Allah, the Exalted, will certainly take them to account and punish them in both worlds. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, oppression to others may cause the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted, to hurl them into Hell on Judgment Day.

***“...Allāh...the Wise.”***

Allah, the Exalted, possesses infinite knowledge of all things and their real nature and acts according to His infinite wisdom in a perfect manner. The muslim who understands this divine name will never object to His choices and decrees knowing that there is wisdom behind each choice of Allah, the Exalted, which benefits His servants even if they are not obvious to 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 act on this divine name by using their knowledge and blessings according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, as this is the ultimate wisdom a person can possess.

***“To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who possesses all sovereignty which is free of all defects. It is a sovereignty which has no beginning, no end, no reduction and no limit. Allah, the Exalted, has complete and total control over the creation through management and judgment without any limitations, partners or helpers. The King cannot be hindered or prevented from carrying out His will.

By accepting Allah, the Exalted, as the only King a muslim indirectly accepts their servanthood to Him. Therefore, they must fulfil all His commands and avoid all His prohibitions. A true servant never questions the wise decisions of the King and instead submits with full trust to His choices knowing that the wise King only decrees the best for His servant. 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.”*

When a muslim recognises Allah, the Exalted, as the King they will not turn to another when seeking help and instead only seek His support through sincere obedience to Him. They will always remember if they obey the King He will protect them from the creation. But if they obey the creation over

Allah, the Exalted, the creation will not be able to protect them from the punishment of the only King. This is indicated in a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. He declared that there is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator.

A muslim should adopt this characteristic according to their status by purifying their inner spiritual king namely, the spiritual heart through acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will cause their servants meaning, their bodily limbs, to obey their spiritual heart in acts of righteousness. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that if the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body will be pure but if the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body will become corrupt. One should not become a slave of their evil desires and instead become a true king which controls their desires according to the teachings of Islam.

Whoever perfects this will be given a spiritual kingdom in both worlds. The ultimate destination of the one who fulfils the rights of the King by perfecting servanthood has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. They will be granted a high station in the presence of the only Omnipotent King. Chapter 54 Al Qamar, verse 55:

*“In a seat of honour near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”*

***“...and He is the Most High...”***

The divine essence and attributes of Allah, the Exalted, are infinitely high and beyond the reach and comprehension of the entire creation. The one who understands this divine name will only obey Allah, the Exalted, as nothing has a higher authority, power or control than Him.

A muslim must act on this divine name by raising their aims and aspirations so they go beyond this material world and are instead directed towards the hereafter. Higher still is the aspiration which is fully focused on Allah, the Exalted, and nothing else. A muslim should also act on this divine name by raising their moral character so that they surpass bad and base character thereby following in the footsteps 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.”*

This noble character should be shown both to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience to Him, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and it must be shown to people by treating them how one desires to be treated by people.

***“...and He is...the Most Great.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is tremendous in attributes and essence beyond the perception and understanding of all.

The one who understands this divine name will observe all things which are not connected to Allah, the Exalted, as small and insignificant. The commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, will be tremendous in their sight so they hasten in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while putting aside all things which can hinder them in this task.

A muslim should act on this divine name by adopting humility as all are humbled before the Greatness of Allah, the Exalted. They should demonstrate humility towards Allah, the Exalted, and towards the creation without showing signs of weakness. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, whoever humbles themselves for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. A muslim should also make their aspirations tremendous by only acting for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and nothing else so that they reach a tremendous station in the presence of an Omnipotent King. Chapter 54 Al Qamar, verse 55:

*“In a seat of honour near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”*

***“...and the angels exalt [Allāh] with praise of their Lord...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6407, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the difference between the person who remembers Allah, the Exalted, and the one who does not is like a living person compared to a dead person.

It is important for muslims who desire to create a strong connection with Allah, the Exalted, so that they can overcome all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter successfully to remember Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible. Put simply, the more they remember Him the more they will achieve this vital goal.

This is achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The second is by remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue. But the highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This is achieved 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. This requires one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds.

Those who remain on the first two levels will receive reward depending on their intention but they are unlikely to increase the strength of their faith and piety unless they move to the third and highest level of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

***“...and the angels...ask forgiveness for those on earth...”***

This is an aspect of sincerity one must adopt towards 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...”*

***“...Unquestionably, it is Allāh who is the Forgiving...”***

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“...Unquestionably, it is Allāh who is...the Merciful.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Most Merciful according to His infinite status. This attribute means that Allah, the Exalted, bestows countless favours on the creation and is always extremely kind to them. This same characteristic has been attributed to others such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 128:

*“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you [i.e., your guidance] and to the believers is kind and merciful.”*

When used in reference to the creation merciful means soft-hearted and compassionate. A muslim must adopt these qualities by looking at the creation through the eye of mercy and by treating them with mercy and compassion whether they are obedient or sinful. Many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 6030, indicate that the one who does not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. So it is vital for muslims to show mercy to all through their actions such as financial and physical help and through their words such as supplicating for them. Islam in fact rewards a muslim who shows mercy to all living things such as animals. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550. In addition, the mercy they show should not be selective or occasional instead they should strive to demonstrate mercy at all times with all of creation.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 6

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهُ حَفِيفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿٦﴾

*“And those who take as allies other than Him - Allah is [yet] Guardian over them; and you are not over them a manager.”*

***“And those who take as allies other than Him...”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after

work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“And those who take as allies other than Him...”***

This verse reminds muslims the importance of remaining steadfast against their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier

that possesses no weapons to defend themselves would be defeated; an ignorant muslim will have no weapon to defend themselves when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“And those who take as allies other than Him...”***

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for.

One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“And those who take as allies other than Him - Allāh is [yet] Guardian over them...”***

This could mean they can never escape His decrees.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, there are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But there are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

*“Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”*

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the

Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

***“And those who take as allies other than Him - Allāh is [yet] Guardian over them...”***

This could also mean He oversees them constantly.

The divine vision of Allah, the Exalted, encompasses everything irrespective of its size or location. In addition, Allah, the Exalted, is a witness to the actions of the creation. He observes their outer physical actions and inner hidden intentions. Nothing can escape His divine vision.

A muslim should therefore strive in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in order to reach the level where they become constantly vigilant of the divine vision. This level has been referred to as excellence of faith in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. When one is fully aware of the divine vision it prevents them from sinning and encourages them to perform righteous deeds.

A muslim should be an overseer of their own soul and constantly take themselves into account in order to ensure they do not become heedless. As the main cause of sin is heedlessness. The one who takes themselves into account will find their accountability on Judgement Day easy. Whoever does not watch themselves like this will commit sins without even realising it. A muslim should also ensure they keep a watchful eye on all the people under their care and advise them accordingly as this is a

responsibility given to them by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

***“...and you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], are not over them a manager.”***

It is important for muslims to understand an important point in respect to advising others. It is the duty of muslims to advise others towards good and forbid evil but a muslim should not behave as if they have been put in charge as controllers over others. This attitude only leads to anger and bitterness especially, when others do not follow their advice. It is best for muslims to discharge their duty by advising others but they should avoid stressing over the outcome of their advice meaning, whether the person acts on their advice or not. If Allah, the Exalted, advised the greatest teacher and guide of mankind namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to stress over the outcome in many places of the Holy Quran how can a muslim claim or behave as if they have been put in charge of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

*“So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”*

The muslim who behaves as a controller will not only become bitter when people fail to follow their advice but it can lead them to giving up advising others which is a duty on all muslims according to their ability.

In addition, this attitude will also cause muslims to neglect themselves and their own duties as they are too busy concerning themselves with the duties of others. Therefore, muslims should remain firm in commanding good and forbidding evil but refrain from observing and bothering about the outcome of their advice.

***“...and you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him],  
are not over them a manager.”***

As all people have not been created the same they are bound to disagree on certain things. In matters related to religion and those which differentiate between lawful and unlawful things a muslim must remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of who challenges or disagrees with them. But in matters where the choice is between to lawful worldly options a muslim is entitled to offer their opinion to others when they are requested to. But they should not waste their time nor stress if others disagree with their opinion. When one holds onto these disagreements over time they can cause enmity to build up between people which can lead to fractured and broken relationships. This can even result in the sin of severing ties with people. So in cases like this it is important for muslims to let things go and not harbour a negative feeling towards someone who disagrees with their opinion and choice. They should instead push themself to agree to disagree and move on from the situation without any ill feelings. The one who fails to do this will find themself always arguing and possessing enmity for others as they are bound to disagree with others on certain topics and issues due to a difference in their characteristics and mentality. Understanding and acting on this advice is a branch of finding peace in this world.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 7

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِنُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا  
وَنُنذِرَ يَوْمَ الْجَمْعِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ فَرِيقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِيقٌ فِي السَّعِيرِ



*“And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Quran that you may warn the Mother of Cities [i.e., Makkah] and those around it and warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt. A party will be in Paradise and a party in the Blaze.”*

***“And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Quran...”***

The non-Muslims of Mecca spent their lives with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and full-well knew he was no liar or madman. As they were masters of the Arabic language they full-well knew that the Holy Quran was not the words of a man.

For example, one of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, Walid Bin Mughira, once held a meeting with the other non-Muslim leaders of Mecca during the time of the Holy Pilgrimage. The Holy Pilgrimage did exist before the coming of Islam but the correct practices of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been completely changed. He advised the other leaders that soon many people would enter Mecca because of the Holy Pilgrimage and they will come across the message of Islam so they needed to unanimously agree on what to say about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to deter people from accepting Islam. Someone advised that they should label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a soothsayer. But Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not a soothsayer as he did not possess any of their crazy characteristics therefore people would not accept this. Another advised that they should tell people the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was crazy and was possessed by evil spirits. But Walid replied that it was obvious this was not true as these signs were not apparent in him. Finally, someone advised to label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a poet so that people would not pay attention to what he says. But again Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Quran or his speech were not poetry as the Arabs were masters of poetry. Walid advised everyone to claim that the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a sorcerer whose goals were to cause separation between people and their religion and divisions within families. After agreeing to this plan they dispersed and waited for people to flood into Mecca for the Holy Pilgrimage and warned them not to pay attention to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they claimed he was a sorcerer. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 362.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was reciting truthful historical accounts and beneficial lessons even though he was unlettered and had not studied the previous divine scriptures, which the non-Muslims of Mecca full well knew, was a clear sign of his Prophethood.

This was supported by the fact that they themselves testified to his sincerity and honesty. In fact, during his childhood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always under the protection of Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the evils that were widespread during the age of ignorance: the time before Islam. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached maturity he was the finest person among his people, the best of them in character and repute, the best of neighbours, the most prudent, the most honest in speech and most trustworthy. He was completely removed from immorality and other evil characteristics. Because of this he became known among the people of Mecca as Al Amin, the trustworthy. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, The Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 180.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spent his entire life amongst the non-Muslims of Mecca was enough of a proof of his declaration of Prophethood. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, invited the non-Muslims of Mecca to embrace Islam he used his 40 years amongst them as proof that he was speaking the truth. This evidence was undeniable even by the non-Muslims. This incident is recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4553. Only the arrogance of some prevented them from submitting to the truth. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

*“...for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?”*

***“And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur’ān that you may warn the Mother of Cities [i.e., Makkah] and those around it...”***

In the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to begin spreading the word of Islam from his relatives. This is another important aspect of spreading the word of Islam. One should always begin with relatives and then move forward to the other members of society. Due to a person’s close bonds and familiarity with their relatives advising them will have more of an affect than advising strangers. In fact, if each person concentrated on their own relatives advising non relatives would only be required on a few occasions. Chapter 26 Ash Shu’ara, verse 214:

*“And warn, [O Muhammad], your closest kindred.”*

After this step the Holy Quran advises one to spread the word of Islam within their local society. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 7:

*“And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Quran that you may warn the Mother of Cities [i.e., Mecca] and those around it...”*

The final step is to invite mankind on a national level towards Islam.  
Chapter 34 Saba, verse 28:

*“And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner...”*

Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this gradual process so therefore, each muslim who undertakes this task should also adopt this method.

***“And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur’ān that you may warn the Mother of Cities [i.e., Makkah] and those around it...”***

One will benefit from the warnings given by the Holy Quran when they fulfil its rights.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both

worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur’ān that you may warn the Mother of Cities [i.e., Makkah] and those around it...”***

This verse indicates the importance of implementing the teachings of Islam as reminders namely; glad tidings and warnings only benefit the person who acts on them. For example, those who ignore road hazard signs are often the ones who end up in dangerous situations. But those who act upon these hazards signs are protected from this danger. The glad tidings indicate the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon lead to the gardens of Paradise. And the warnings are the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon protects one from divine punishment such as Hell.

***“And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur’ān that you may warn the Mother of Cities [i.e., Makkah] and those around it...”***

This verse reminds muslims of the very important position they have been appointed to by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the ambassadors of Islam, as it is their duty to continue the mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is extremely important for muslims to fulfil this duty according to their potential. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many muslims today believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A muslim should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

In addition, this important position should remind muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah,

the Exalted, become angry with the muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

***“...and warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt...”***

Ignorance prevents one from obtaining certainty of faith.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“...and warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt...”***

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a

thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“...and warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt...”***

The one who is certain about the Day of Judgement will practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“...and warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt...”***

The one who is certain about the Day of Judgement will practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has 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 warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt. A party will be in Paradise and a party in the Blaze.”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person who imitates a people is counted as one of them.

All muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly warns that a muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done 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.

But those who verbally declare their love for the righteous and fail to imitate them and instead imitate the characteristics found in hypocrites and the sinful will be considered and judged as one of them. This does not mean they will lose their faith but it means they will be judged as disobedient muslims. How can a disobedient muslim be counted as an obedient muslim and end up with the righteous? This is only wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 20:

*“Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise. The companions of Paradise - they are the attainers [of success].”*

***“...and warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt. A party will be in Paradise and a party in the Blaze.”***

Every muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they barely know him as they are too busy to study his life, character and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

***“...and warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt. A party will be in Paradise and a party in the Blaze.”***

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.

***“...and warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt. A party will be in Paradise and a party in the Blaze.”***

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 warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt. A party will be in Paradise and a party in the Blaze.”***

The Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation on the Day of Judgment. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864.

This will cause people to sweat according to the deeds they performed during their lives on Earth. Some people's sweat will reach up to their ankles, some their knees and for others it will reach their mouths.

One only needs to ponder over the times they were subjected to intense summer weather and how the heat affected their attitude and behaviour. Through this one can imagine how difficult the situation on Judgment Day will be when the Sun is brought so close to them. This shows that those who strive hard and exert sincere efforts in the obedience 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, will find relaxation on Judgment Day. But those who were lazy and relaxed during their lives on Earth will be subjected to great stress on Judgment Day. Simply put, the one who strives here will relax there but the one who relaxes here will strive there in difficulty.

The same way people strive hard in this material world so that they obtain a comfortable life and even a comfortable retirement, even though reaching this retirement age is not guaranteed, muslims should strive

even harder in this world by obeying Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life so that they can obtain peace and comfort on a day that is guaranteed to occur. It is a sign of great ignorance to strive for a day one may never reach namely, the day of retirement, and not strive for a day they are guaranteed to reach and experience namely, Judgment Day.

***“...and warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt. A party will be in Paradise and a party in the Blaze.”***

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 warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt. A party will be in Paradise and a party in the Blaze.”***

People will be commanded to cross the Bridge which will be placed over Hell on the Day of Judgment. This has been discussed extensively in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6573. It warns that extremely large hooks will be on the Bridge which will affect people according to their deeds. Some will be flung into Hell by them, some will be subjected to great torture before they cross the Bridge, others will only face minimal injury from them and finally the righteous will not be harmed by them. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 455, warns that the Bridge is narrower than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword.

The important thing to learn from this is that each person will cross the Bridge according to their deeds. So it is important for Muslims not to neglect any duties if they desire to cross the Bridge safely. They must fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. These include duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. One should not neglect this and simply hope they will magically cross the Bridge unaffected.

In addition, the ease at which a person will cross this Bridge will be a mirror of how much they remained steadfast on the straight path of Islam in this world. This straight path is the path 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...”*

Anyone who abandons this path will not successfully cross this Bridge. Simply put, the more one remains steadfast on the straight path in this world the easier they will cross the Bridge over Hell on Judgment Day. The straight path has been made clear in this world so muslims are left with no excuses from following it thereby ensuring they safely cross the Bridge on Judgment Day.

***“...and warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt. A party will be in Paradise and a party in the Blaze.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2559, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Paradise is surrounded by hardships and Hell is surrounded by desires.

This means the path which leads to Paradise contains difficulties and hardships. In most cases, a person cannot obtain good in this world without going through some sort of difficulty, such as exerting one's energy, then how can one believe they can obtain Paradise without facing difficulties? If one turns the pages of history they will observe the righteous always faced difficulties but as they knew the path of Paradise contained difficulties they maintained their focus on the destination instead of the difficulties. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that no one had been tested more than him in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472. Therefore, muslims must realize a fact that facing some difficulties in this world is an extremely small price to pay to obtain the permanent bliss of Paradise. Therefore, they should remain patient through all difficulties while focusing on the destination.

The path to Hell is full of desires. This indicates the importance of maintaining one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, at all times by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Even though it is not unlawful to enjoy lawful pleasures in this world a muslim should minimize these as much as possible as these lawful desires often lead to unlawful desires. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At

Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who behaves in such a manner will safe guard their faith and honor. A muslim should never obey their desires or the desires of others if it means they will disobey Allah, the Exalted, as the pleasure of fulfilling desires vanishes quickly whereas the regret and the potential punishment will last long.

To conclude, a desire fulfilled will not make one feel better if they end up in Hell. And a difficulty one faces will not make them feel bad if they end up in Paradise.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verses 8-9

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَهُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ يَدْخُلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي  
رَحْمَتِهِ وَالظَّالِمُونَ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٨﴾

أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۗ فَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْوَلِيُّ وَهُوَ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى وَهُوَ  
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٩﴾

*“And if Allah willed, He could have made them [of] one religion, but He admits whom He wills into His mercy. And the wrongdoers have not any protector or helper.*

*Or have they taken protectors [or allies] besides Him? But Allah - He is the Protector, and He gives life to the dead, and He is over all things competent.”*

***“And if Allah willed...”***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, there are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But there are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

*“Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”*

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe

that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

***“And if Allāh willed, He could have made them [of] one religion, but He admits whom He wills into His mercy...”***

Forcing guidance upon people negates the test of this world and therefore renders this world pointless.

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in

evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“...but He admits whom He wills into His mercy...”***

This verse is connected to chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

*“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”*

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfil the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's

day. A muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

***“...And the wrongdoers have not any protector or helper.”***

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.

***“...And the wrongdoers have not any protector or helper. Or have they taken protectors [or allies] besides Him?...”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after

work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“...And the wrongdoers have not any protector or helper. Or have they taken protectors [or allies] besides Him?...”***

These verses remind muslims the importance of remaining steadfast against their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant muslim will have no weapon to defend himself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“...And the wrongdoers have not any protector or helper. Or have they taken protectors [or allies] besides Him?...”***

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their

worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“...But Allāh - He is the Protector...”***

Allah, the Exalted, safeguards and preserves the creation and takes care of them with special care. He protects the obedient from the plots and traps of the Devil and He safeguards the disobedient from His immediate punishment in order to give them an opportunity to sincerely repent.

A muslim should act on this divine name by using the means provided to them by Allah, the Exalted, but always trust in His divine care and choices in every situation and outcome they face even if they do not observe the wisdom behind some choices. This inspires patience and even contentment with the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

*“...And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him...”*

A muslim should also understand that they will only be protected from misguidance and punishment by the Guardian namely, Allah, the Exalted. This removes any signs of pride and ensures they seek His protection through sincere obedience to Him. A muslim must act on this divine name by safeguarding every trust they possess such as their blessings by using them according to the teachings of Islam. They should safeguard their actions and speech from the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This will

ensure they receive more blessings from 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]...”*

***“...and He gives life to the dead...”***

When Allah, the Exalted, created mankind from nothing, resurrecting them from dust and bones will be easier for Him.

Allah, the Exalted, is Al Khaliq, which means the Creator, Al Baari which means the Maker and Al Musawwir which means the Fashioner.

The Creator is the One who brings something into existence. In reality, there is no Creator except Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One who creates without any aid from another. On other hand, an inventor only invents things through the aid of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 96:

*“While Allah created you and that which you do?”*

The Maker is the One who arranges all of the creation and prepares them for receiving the forms He has chosen for them which is linked to the next divine name mentioned earlier namely, the Fashioner.

The Creator makes things manifest. The Maker chooses their shape, appearance, and time of creation. The Fashioner fashions the creation according to His divine will.

After understanding these divine names a Muslim must trust Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. If Allah, the Exalted, created and manages the entire universe He is more than capable in sorting out a person's problems. In addition, these names indicate that Allah, the Exalted, is the One who creates and chooses all things. So a Muslim should not challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to nothing except disappointment. It is therefore better to submit obediently and patiently await relief knowing that Allah, the Exalted, only decrees the best for His servants even if this wisdom is not obvious to them. As a Muslim is short sighted it is better to trust in the Creator whose wisdom has no limits. 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 He gives life to the dead...”***

When Allah, the Exalted, created mankind from nothing, resurrecting them from dust and bones will be easier for Him.

Allah, the Exalted, alone created and controls both life and death.

The muslim who understands this divine name will submit and sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience without fearing any of the creation while knowing nothing controls life or death except Allah, the Exalted. In addition, a muslim who recognises this fact will understand that as Allah, the Exalted, chose the beginning and end of every creation He has also chosen everything that occurs in between. The choices of Allah, the Exalted, are unavoidable so one should not become impatient when facing them. Instead they should simply sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in every situation so that they obtain reward with every passing moment. For example, they should demonstrate patience during times of difficulty and demonstrate true gratitude by using the blessings they possess correctly in times of ease. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500.

A muslim should act on this divine name by bringing their spiritual heart to life and cause death to their ego and negative characteristics by striving to

remove them from themselves through obtaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“...and He gives life to the dead...”***

When Allah, the Exalted, created mankind from nothing, resurrecting them from dust and bones will be easier for Him.

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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.

***“...and He is over all things competent.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who over powers all things, who in reality is the only One who possesses power and might. Anyone else who possesses strength only does so because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. There is no atom in this world or in the next that can escape the power and authority of Allah, the Exalted.

As all power belongs to Allah, the Exalted, a muslim should therefore always remember that the strength to perform righteous deeds and refrain from sins comes from Allah, the Exalted, alone. This will remove any chance of pride creeping into their heart. An atom's worth of which is enough to take a person to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Whoever desires for their faith to become mighty must obey the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be granted strong faith which will aid them to overcome all difficulties so that they leave this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. True obedience only lies in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. 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.”*

Truly Knowing Allah, the Exalted, is All Mighty should prevent a muslim from sinning. As they should know there is no way to escape the might of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, when a muslim engraves this divine name into their heart it prevents them from committing oppression and wronging others. They become fully aware that even if there is no person powerful enough to seek justice from them Allah, the Exalted, will certainly take them to account and punish them in both worlds. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, oppression to others may cause the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted, to hurl them into Hell on Judgment Day.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 10

وَمَا أَخْلَفْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكْمُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ذَالِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبِّي  
عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ ﴿١٠﴾

*“And in anything over which you disagree - its ruling is [to be referred] to Allah. [Say], “That is Allah, my Lord; upon Him I have relied, and to Him I turn back.””*

***“And in anything over which you disagree - its ruling is [to be referred] to Allah...”***

This means one must base their choices on what has been revealed by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This involves sincerely obeying and following them.

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

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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 in anything over which you disagree - its ruling is [to be referred] to Allah...”***

This means one must base their choices on what has been revealed by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This involves sincerely obeying and following them.

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 in anything over which you disagree - its ruling is [to be referred] to Allah...”***

This means one must base their choices on what has been revealed by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This involves sincerely obeying and following them.

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.

***“And in anything over which you disagree - its ruling is [to be referred] to Allah...”***

This means one must base their choices on what has been revealed by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This involves sincerely obeying and following them.

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.

***“...[Say], "That is Allāh, my Lord;..."”***

This verse is connected to chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

*“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware."”*

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere 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.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a muslim has a choice between pleasing

Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments, enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person's heart indicates that it is a duty on muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a muslim. Certainty of faith allows a muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“...[Say], "That is Allāh, my Lord; upon Him I have relied..."”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2344, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if people truly trusted Allah, the Exalted, He would provide for them just like He provides for birds. They leave their nests hungry in the morning and return in the evening satisfied.

Truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is something which is felt in the heart but is proven through the limbs meaning, when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

*“...And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him...”*

The aspect of trust which is internal involves firmly believing that only Allah, the Exalted, can provide one with beneficial things and protect them from harmful things both in worldly and religious matters. A muslim understands that no one except Allah, the Exalted, can give, withhold, harm or benefit someone.

It is important to note, that truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, does not mean one should abandon using the means which Allah, the Exalted, has provided, such as medicine. As the main Hadith under discussion clearly mentions that the birds leave their nests actively searching for provision. When one uses the strength and means provided by Allah, the Exalted, according to the teachings of Islam they are undoubtedly obeying Him. This is in fact, the outward element of trusting in Allah, the Exalted. This has been made clear in many verses and Hadiths. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 71:

*“O you who have believed, take your precaution...”*

In reality, the outward activity is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and trusting Allah, the Exalted, inwardly is the inward state of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One should not abandon the outward tradition even if they possess the inward state of trust.

Actions and using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting Him. In this respect, actions can be split into three categories. The first are those actions of obedience which Allah, the Exalted, commands muslims to do so that they can avoid Hell and obtain Paradise. Abandoning these while claiming trust that Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them is simply wishful thinking and is therefore blameworthy.

The second type of actions are those means which Allah, the Exalted, has created in this world in order for people to live in it safely, such as eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty and wearing warm clothes in cold weather. A person who abandons these and causes harm to himself is blameworthy. However, there are some people who have been provided special strength by Allah, the Exalted, so that they can avoid these means without harming themselves. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used to fast for days on end uninterrupted but forbade others from doing the same as Allah, the Exalted, provided for him directly without the need for food. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1922. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed for the fourth rightly guided Caliph Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, so that he would not feel excess cold or heat. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 117. Therefore, if a person turns away from these means but is provided with the strength to endure without failing in their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people then it is acceptable otherwise it is blameworthy.

The third type of actions in respect to trusting in Allah, the Exalted, are those things which have been set as a customary practice which Allah, the Exalted, sometimes breaks for certain people. An example of this are the people who become cured of illnesses without the need of medicine. This is quite common especially in poorer countries where medicine is difficult to obtain. This is linked to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2144, which advises that no person will die until they utilize every ounce of their provision which was allocated to them, which according to another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, was over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. So the one who truly realises this Hadith might not seek provision actively knowing that what was allocated to them so long ago cannot miss them. So for this person the customary means of obtaining provision such as obtaining it

through a job is broken by Allah, the Exalted. This is a high and rare rank. Only the one who can behave in such a manner without complaining or panicking nor expecting things from people is free of blame if they choose this path. It is important to note, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692, that it is a sin for a person to fail in providing for their dependents even though they may be on this high rank.

Having real trust in Allah, the Exalted, leads to being content with destiny. Meaning, whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them they accept without complaint and without desiring things to change as they firmly trust that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the 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.”*

To conclude, it is best to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by using the lawful means one has been granted firmly believing they are from Allah, the Exalted, and trust internally that only what Allah, the Exalted, decides will occur, which is undoubtedly the best choice for each person whether they observe this or not.

***“...[Say], "That is Allāh, my Lord; upon Him I have relied..."”***

Muslims often question how they can build up and strengthen their trust in Allah, the Exalted, especially during difficulties. One of the main ways of doing this is through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is because the one who is disobedient to Allah, the Exalted, will always believe Allah, the Exalted, will not help them which in turn weakens their trust in Him. Whereas, the obedient muslim will firmly believe that as they have fulfilled their duties Allah, the Exalted, will definitely respond to them in their moment of need which in turn strengthens their trust in Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, advises that Allah, the Exalted, responds to a person according to their perception of Him. The disobedient person will always have negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, because of their disobedience. Whereas, an obedient muslim will always have positive thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, because of their obedience. This thinking can weaken or strengthen a muslim's trust in Allah, the Exalted. The obedient muslim trusts that if they fulfilled their side of a business contract their business partner would do the same. Similarly, an obedient muslim trusts that as they through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, have fulfilled their duties Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil His promises by aiding them throughout their life especially, through difficulties. Whereas, the one who does not fulfil their side of a business contract would not trust or hope that their business partner will fulfil their side. Similarly, a disobedient person would not trust that Allah, the Exalted, would aid them as they failed to fulfil their duties.

To conclude, having and building trust in Allah, the Exalted, is directly linked to His obedience. The more one is obedient the more they will trust in Him. The less they are obedient they less they will trust in Him.

***“...[Say], "That is Allāh, my Lord; upon Him I have relied..."”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey 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 whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

***“...[Say], "That is Allāh, my Lord...to Him I turn back.””***

Constantly turning back to Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of being sincere to 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verses 11-12

فَاطِرُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ  
الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا يَذُرُّكُمْ فِيهِ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ  
السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١١﴾

لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ  
وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

*“[He is] Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you from yourselves, mates, and among the cattle, mates; He multiplies you thereby. There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.*

*To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth. He extends provision for whom He wills and restricts [it]. Indeed He is, of all things, Knowing.”*

***“[He is] Creator of the heavens and the earth...There is nothing like unto Him...”***

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

***“...He has made for you from yourselves, mates...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is Al Khaliq, which means the Creator, Al Baari which means the Maker and Al Musawwir which means the Fashioner.

The Creator is the One who brings something into existence. In reality, there is no Creator except Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One who creates without any aid from another. On other hand, an inventor only invents things through the aid of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 96:

*“While Allah created you and that which you do?”*

The Maker is the One who arranges all of the creation and prepares them for receiving the forms He has chosen for them which is linked to the next divine name mentioned earlier namely, the Fashioner.

The Creator makes things manifest. The Maker chooses their shape, appearance, and time of creation. The Fashioner fashions the creation according to His divine will.

After understanding these divine names a muslim must trust Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. If Allah, the Exalted, created and manages the entire universe He is more than capable in sorting out a person's problems. In addition, these names indicate that Allah, the Exalted, is the One who creates and chooses all things. So a muslim should not challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to nothing except disappointment. It is therefore better to submit obediently and patiently await relief knowing that Allah, the Exalted, only decrees the best for His servants even if this wisdom is not obvious to them. As a muslim is short sighted it is better to trust in the Creator whose wisdom has no limits. 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.”*

***“...He has made for you from yourselves, mates...He multiplies you thereby...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person is married for four reasons: their wealth, lineage, beauty or for their piety. He concluded by warning that a person should marry for the sake of piety otherwise they will be a loser.

It is important to understand that the first three things mentioned in this Hadith are very transient and imperfect. They may give someone temporary happiness but ultimately these things will become a burden for them as they are linked to the material world and not to the thing which grants ultimate and permanent success namely, faith. One only needs to observe the rich and famous in order to understand that wealth does not bring happiness. In fact, the rich are the most unsatisfied and unhappy people on Earth. Marrying someone for the sake of their lineage is foolish as it does not guarantee the person will make a good spouse. In fact, if the marriage does not work out it destroys the family bond the two families possessed before the marriage. Marrying only for the sake of beauty meaning, love is not wise as this is a fickle emotion which changes with the passing of time and with one's mood. How many couples supposedly drowned in love ended up hating each other?

But it is important to note, that this Hadith does not mean one should find a spouse who is poor as it is important to get married to someone who can financially support a family. Neither does it mean one should not be

attracted to their spouse as this is an important aspect of a healthy marriage. But this Hadith means that these things should not be the main or ultimate reason someone gets married. The main and ultimate quality a muslim should look for in a spouse is piety. This is when a muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience. Put simply, the one who fears Allah, the Exalted, will treat their spouse well in both times of happiness and difficulty. On the other hand, those who are irreligious will mistreat their spouse whenever they are upset. This is one of the main reasons why domestic violence has increased amongst muslims in recent years.

Finally, if a muslim desires to get married they should firstly obtain the knowledge associated with it, such as the rights they owe their spouse, the rights they are owed from their spouse and how to correctly deal with one's spouse in different situations. Unfortunately, ignorance of this leads to many arguments and divorces as people demand things which their spouse is not obliged to fulfill. Knowledge is the foundation of a healthy and successful marriage.

***“...He has made for you...among the cattle, mates; He multiplies you thereby...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is infinitely bountiful and bestows favours and blessings without recompense or external cause. He gives generously without being asked.

The muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to 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]...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by bestowing the blessings they have been given to others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. The one who gives to others will be given more than they could have ever imagined. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.”*

***“...There is nothing like unto Him...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is Single in His entity, attributes and acts. He is neither resembled by nor resembles anything whatsoever and He is without partner or equal.

The muslim who understands this divine name will ensure their actions are only performed sincerely for one single entity namely, Allah, the Exalted. Otherwise, they may find that on Judgment Day they are ordered to seek their reward from those who they acted for which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to perfect their faith by loving, hating, giving and withholding for none other than Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“...There is nothing like unto Him...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is sanctified and free of all possible flaws and deficiencies and the One who deserves to be described with every attribute of perfection.

A muslim should plead to Allah, the Exalted, to sanctify and purify them of all their sins and bestow them with attributes He loves. A muslim should therefore actively purify their body from sins. Purify themselves from following evil desires. Purify their wealth by not seeking it from doubtful or unlawful sources. Purify their minds from heedlessness of the divine law. Purify their intention so they only act for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, even in worldly deeds as these are recorded as good deeds for example, providing for one's family in a lawful manner. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 4006.

***“...and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.”***

Nothing irrespective of its size and location is out of the reach of the divine sight and hearing of Allah, the Exalted.

The muslim who understands this divine name will be extremely cautious in their actions and speech. The same way one becomes vigilant over their actions when they are in the hearing and seeing range of someone they respect or fear a true muslim will be vigilant over their behaviour knowing no word or action escapes Allah, the Exalted. In fact, acting in this way is the high level of faith which has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. If one remains steadfast on this behaviour then they will eventually reach excellence of faith whereby they perform acts, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted, constantly watching their inner and outer being. This attitude will prevent sins and encourage one to sincerely perform righteous deeds.

In addition, this divine name encourages muslims never to give up hope whenever they face a difficulty thereby believing no one is aware or even cares about them. Allah, the Exalted, undoubtedly hears and sees their distress and will respond at the time which is best for His servant. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

*“And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by using these two senses in the way commanded by Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, one should not observe unlawful and vain things nor should they listen to unlawful and vain things. They should instead use them in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to avoid vain things as they are often the first step to the unlawful. This is achieved by acting on the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502. It advises that when one fulfils the commands of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to the obligatory duties and then strives in voluntary righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, He empowers their senses such as their sight and hearing so that they only use them in accordance to His desire and pleasure.

***“To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who possesses all sovereignty which is free of all defects. It is a sovereignty which has no beginning, no end, no reduction and no limit. Allah, the Exalted, has complete and total control over the creation through management and judgment without any limitations, partners or helpers. The King cannot be hindered or prevented from carrying out His will.

By accepting Allah, the Exalted, as the only King a muslim indirectly accepts their servanthood to Him. Therefore, they must fulfil all His commands and avoid all His prohibitions. A true servant never questions the wise decisions of the King and instead submits with full trust to His choices knowing that the wise King only decrees the best for His servant. 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.”*

When a muslim recognises Allah, the Exalted, as the King they will not turn to another when seeking help and instead only seek His support through sincere obedience to Him. They will always remember if they obey the King He will protect them from the creation. But if they obey the creation over Allah, the Exalted, the creation will not be able to protect them from the

punishment of the only King. This is indicated in a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. He declared that there is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator.

A muslim should adopt this characteristic according to their status by purifying their inner spiritual king namely, the spiritual heart through acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will cause their servants meaning, their bodily limbs, to obey their spiritual heart in acts of righteousness. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that if the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body will be pure but if the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body will become corrupt. One should not become a slave of their evil desires and instead become a true king which controls their desires according to the teachings of Islam.

Whoever perfects this will be given a spiritual kingdom in both worlds. The ultimate destination of the one who fulfils the rights of the King by perfecting servanthood has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. They will be granted a high station in the presence of the only Omnipotent King. Chapter 54 Al Qamar, verse 55:

*“In a seat of honour near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”*

***“...He extends provision for whom He wills...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Creator and Allocator of provision to the entire creation which they need to preserve their physical and spiritual constitutions. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the provision of the entire creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

The one who understands this divine name will rely on Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them as He has planned for them before they were created. They will prove this reliance by striving to gain lawful provision as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, while refraining from anything which is unlawful and doubtful.

It is important to note that as people require physical provision in the form of food and drink. Similarly, the soul of a muslim requires provision also. This provision strengthens it and leads it to eternal bliss. This provision is in the form of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The foundation of all this is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Therefore, muslims should strive to gain this important provision of the soul as well as provision for their physical body. Two elements should be remembered in this respect. Do not exert unlawful and unnecessary efforts in gaining one's guaranteed provision. And do not misuse or waste the provision one gains.

A muslim, should act on this divine name by fulfilling their duty by providing for their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. This includes providing them with both physical and spiritual provision through education. A muslim should also do the same for the needy according to their capacity without fearing poverty for themselves. They should remember the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893, which advises that Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the needs of the muslim who takes care of the needs of others.

***“...He extends provision for whom He wills and restricts [it]...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who contracts and expands. It can mean that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who contracts the life and provision of someone through tests and trials. And He is the only One who can expand these things through divine blessings and relief from difficulties. In each case, Allah, the Exalted, provides His servants with what is best for them. For example, the faith of some will only remain strong if their lives are contracted for if they reached a time of expansion they would step out of bounds which would lead them to Hell. Conversely, the faith of some will only remain strong if they experience expansion in life as difficulties can cause their faith to be shaken which causes impatience and can lead them to Hell. 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.”*

Therefore, the muslim who understands this divine name will be grateful for whatever situation they are experiencing knowing it is best for them and in each case they will adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. During times of contraction they will remain patient and in times of expansion they will remain grateful. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the one who behaves in this manner will always obtain blessings in all situations.

One should act on this divine name by contracting away from all the things which displease Allah, the Exalted, and expand their efforts towards the things which please Allah, the Exalted. They should contract their own lives by minimising indulging in the excess of this material world and expand the lives of others by striving to benefit them according to their means.

***“...Indeed He is, of all things, Knowing.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verses 13-14

﴿ شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي  
أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى  
أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا  
نَدَعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي  
إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُنِيبُ ﴾

﴿ وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ  
وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى لَفُضِيَ  
بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُورِثُوا الْكُتُبَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لَفِي  
شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مُرِيبٍ ﴾

*“He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein. Difficult for those who associate others with Allah is that to which you invite them. Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back [to Him].*

*And they did not become divided until after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves. And if not for a word<sup>1</sup> that preceded from your Lord [postponing the penalty] until a specified time, it would have been concluded between them. And indeed, those who were granted inheritance of the Scripture after them are, concerning it, in disquieting doubt.”*

***“He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion...”***

This involves sincerity. 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: Allah, the Exalted, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran, to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to the leaders of society and to the general public.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the

tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being sincere to the leaders of the community. This includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary, such as financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

*"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you..."*

This makes it clear that it is a duty to obey the leaders of society. But it is important to note, this obedience is a duty as long as one does not disobey Allah, the Exalted. There is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator. In cases like this, revolting against leaders should be avoided as it only leads to the harm of innocent people. Instead, the leaders should be gently advised good and forbidden evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should advise others to act accordingly and always supplicate for the leaders to remain on the correct path. If the leaders remain straight the general public will remain straight, also.

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in matters which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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...”*

***“He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein...Allah chooses for Himself whom He will...”***

Generally speaking, the scholars from the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) living in Medina were fully aware of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they had been described in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

*“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons...”*

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

*“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons...”*

It is important to note, that all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, came with the same religion, Islam – submission to Allah, the Exalted. The only thing they differed in were smaller issues but their core and

fundamental teachings were one in the same. As the Holy Quran was in harmony with the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures there was no good reason why the people of the book should have rejected the Holy Quran and the one to whom it was given namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, it was more appropriate for them to accept Islam as the scholars of the people of the book possessed knowledge which allowed them to recognize the truth easily.

In addition, the fact that the Holy Quran confirmed the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures meant that when one rejected the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they were in essence rejecting their previous divine scriptures and their Holy Prophets, such as the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon them, also.

After all these signs verifying the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, many of the scholars of the people of the book still concealed and misinterpreted their divine teachings out of envy and fear of losing the social status and wealth they had obtained as leaders of their societies.

For example, prior to the announcement of Prophethood the scholars of Judaism and Christianity, who were mainly living in Medina, were all awaiting and anticipating the arrival of the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, as he had been described in detail in their divine

scriptures. This has been confirmed in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146 of the Holy Quran:

*“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [i.e., Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] as they know their own sons. But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it].”*

For example, there was a Jewish scholar named Yusha. He would often declare that the time was near for a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, to be sent to the people of Arabia. He would urge people to believe in this final Holy Prophet, peace and be upon them, if they lived to his time and witnessed his call. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared Prophethood the same people Yusha urged to accept this final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, accepted him and became Muslims but Yusha himself rejected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Islam out of envy and evil. This incident has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 212.

It is important for Muslims to avoid the major sin of envy. In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

Envy is a serious and major sin because the envier's problem is not with another person in reality it is with Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who granted the blessing which is envied. So a person's envy only demonstrates their displeasure with the allocation and choice of Allah, the Exalted. They believe Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake when He allocated a particular blessing to another person instead of them.

Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when the envier strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing. Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feelings and strives to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing. Even though this type is not a sin it is considered disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and praiseworthy if it is over a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first person who can be lawfully envied is the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second person who can be lawfully envied is the one who uses their knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

An envious Muslim should strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person envied such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

One of the reasons why many of the Jewish and Christian scholars rejected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was out of envy. They envied the fact that he was a descendent of the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him, instead of being a descendent of the Holy Prophet Ishaq, peace be upon him, like they were. Even though this was a foolish reason to reject Islam but in reality they were under the impression that the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, would greatly honor them and appoint them as leaders for mankind out of some loyalty to brotherhood. According to their belief this leadership would increase them in social status and wealth. But when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, constructively criticized their blatant disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, which was fueled by their extreme love for wealth and social status they rejected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Islam.

***“He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein...”***

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6541, discusses some aspects of creating unity within society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, firstly advised muslims not to envy each other.

This is when a person desires to obtain the very blessing someone else possesses meaning, they desire for the owner to lose the blessing. And it involves disliking the fact that the owner was given the blessing by Allah, the Exalted, instead of them. Some only desire this to occur in their hearts without showing it through their actions or speech. If they dislike their thought and feeling it is hoped that they will not be held accountable for their envy. Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when a person strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing.

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feeling and if they strive to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the

praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second is when a person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

The evil type of envy, as mentioned earlier, directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The envious person behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. This is why it is a major sin. In fact, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903, envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

An envious muslim must strive to act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. An envious muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people

according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A muslim should remember that other people are not perfect just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess.

Another point must be made on this topic. A muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those who oppose their scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars a muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a muslim to sever ties with another muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another muslim. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a muslim

should continue to advise the other muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims are commanded to be like brothers to one another. This is only achievable if they obey the previous advice given in this Hadith and strive to fulfil their duty towards other muslims according to the teachings of Islam, such as helping others in matters of good and warning them from evil matters. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, advises that a muslim should fulfil the following rights of other muslims: they are to return the Islamic greeting of peace, to visit the sick, to take part in their funeral prayers and to reply to the sneezer who praises Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must learn and fulfil all the rights other people, especially other muslims, have over them.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another muslim. The sins a

person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4884, that whoever humiliates another muslim Allah, the Exalted, will humiliate them. And whoever protects a muslim from humiliation will be protected by Allah, the Exalted.

The negative characteristics mentioned in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning can develop when one adopts pride. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, pride is when one looks down on others in contempt. The proud person sees themselves as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is

confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that it is a sin for a muslim to hate another muslim. This hatred applies to worldly things and not disliking others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, loving and hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then a muslim must show respect to others in all cases and dislike only their sins without actually hating the person. In addition, their dislike must never cause them to act against the teachings of Islam as this would prove their hatred is based on their own desires and not for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The root cause of despising others for worldly reasons is pride. It is vital to understand that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a muslim's life, property and honour are all sacred. A muslim must not violate any of these rights without a just reason. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true muslim until they protect other people, including non-muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the

oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should treat others exactly how they want people to treat them. This will lead to much blessings for an individual and create unity within their society.

***“He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein...”***

Since the passing of the righteous predecessors the strength of the muslim nation has weakened dramatically. It is logical that the greater the number of people in a group the stronger the group will become yet muslims have somehow defied this logic. The strength of the muslim nation has only decreased as the number of muslims have increased. One of the main reasons this has occurred is connected to chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2 of the Holy Quran:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many muslims now observe who is doing an action instead of observing what they are doing. If the person is linked to them for example, a relative, they support them even if the thing is not good. Similarly, if the person has no relationship with them they turn away from supporting them even if the thing is good. This attitude completely contradicts the traditions of the righteous predecessors. They would support others in good irrespective of who was doing it. In fact, they

went so far on acting on this verse of the Holy Quran that they would even support those they did not get on with as long as it was a good thing.

The other thing connected to this is that many muslims fail to support each other in good as they believe the person they are supporting will gain more prominence than them. This condition has even affected scholars and Islamic educational institutes. They make lame excuses not to aid others in good as they do not have a relationship with them and they fear their own institution will be forgotten and those they help will gain further respect in society. But this is completely wrong as one only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the truth. As long as one's intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, supporting others in good will increase their respect within society. Allah, the Exalted, will cause the hearts of the people to turn to them even if their support is for another organisation, institution or person. For example, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed this world Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily challenged for the Caliphate and would have found plenty of support in his favour. But he knew the right thing to do was to nominate Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not worry about being forgotten by society if he supported another person. He instead obeyed the command in the verse mentioned earlier and supported what was right. This is confirmed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. The honour and respect of Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, within society only increased by this action. This is obvious to those who are aware of Islamic history.

Muslims must reflect on this deeply, change their mentality and strive to aid others in good irrespective of who is doing it and not hold back fearing their

support will cause them to be forgotten within society. Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will never be forgotten in both this world and the next. In fact, their respect and honour will only grow in both worlds.

***“He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that he did not fear poverty for the muslim nation. Instead he feared that the world would become easy to obtain and plentiful for them. This would cause them to compete for it which would lead to their destruction as this same competition destroyed the previous nations.

It is important to understand that this does not only apply to wealth. But this warning applies to all aspects of people's worldly desires which can be encompassed by the desire for fame, wealth, authority and the social aspects of one's life, such as family, friends and a career. Whenever one aims to fulfil their desires by pursuing these things, even if they are lawful, beyond their needs it will distract them from preparing for the hereafter. It will lead them to bad character such as being wasteful and extravagant and may even take them towards sins in order to obtain these things. Failing to obtain them may lead to impatience and other acts of defiance and disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious these desires have taken control over many muslims as they would happily get up in the middle of the night in order to obtain these things such as wealth or go on a holiday but will fail to do so when advised to offer the voluntary night prayer or attend the morning obligatory prayer at the Mosque with congregation.

There is no harm in obtaining these things as long as they are lawful and required in order to fulfil a person's needs and the needs of their dependents. But when a person goes beyond this then they will become preoccupied with them at the loss of their hereafter as the more one pursues their desires the less they will strive in preparing for the hereafter. And therefore, the warning given in this Hadith will apply to them.

***“He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4297, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a day would soon come when other nations would attack the muslim nation and even though they would be great in number they would be deemed insignificant by the world. Allah, the Exalted, would remove the fear of muslims from the hearts' of the other nations. This would occur because of the muslim nation's love for the material world and their hatred for death.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were small in number yet, they overcame entire nations whereas the muslims today are greater in number yet, have no social or political influence in the world. This is because the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, lived their lives according to the teachings of Islam thereby, favouring and preparing for the hereafter over enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. Whereas, most of the muslims today have adopted the opposite mind-set. It is important to understand that the root of all sins is the love of the material world. This is because any sin which is committed is done out of love and desire for it. The material world can be split into four aspects: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their relatives and friends. It is in the excess pursuit of these things which lead to sins, such as earning unlawful wealth out of love for fortune. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that love for wealth and authority is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction two hungry wolves would cause if they were let loose on a herd of sheep. Whenever people seek the excess of these

aspects of the material world it always leads to disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. When this occurs the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is removed which leads to nothing but trouble.

Even though, some muslims believe pursuing the excess things of the material world is harmless it is something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3158. He warned that he did not fear poverty for muslims. What he feared was that muslims would pursue the excess of this material world, such as excess wealth, and this would cause them to compete with each other over it and this would lead to their destruction. As warned in this Hadith this was the behaviour of the past nations.

As the material world is limited it is obvious that people would have to compete over it if they desired more than their necessities. This competition would cause them to adopt the characteristics which contradict the character of a true muslim, such as envy and enmity for others. They would stop caring for each other as they are too busy competing in gathering and hoarding the material world. And they would contradict the advice given in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6011, which advises that muslims should act like one body when any part of the body suffers from an illness the rest of the body shares in the pain. This competition would drive a muslim to stop loving for others what they love for themselves which is a characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, as they desire to outdo their fellow muslims in worldly things. Persisting on this competition will cause a muslim to love, hate, give and withhold all for the sake of the material world instead of for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This competition is

the difference between the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and many of the muslims today.

If muslims desire to regain the strength and influence Islam once had they must strive and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over striving for obtaining and hoarding the excess of this material world. This must occur from an individual level until it affects the whole nation.

***“He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the muslim nation is like one body. If any part of the body suffers pain the rest of the body shares in its pain.

This Hadith, like many others, indicates the importance of not becoming so self-absorbed into one's own life thereby behaving as if the universe revolves around them and their problems. The Devil inspires a muslim to focus so much on their own life and their problems that they lose focus on the bigger picture which leads to impatience and causes them to become heedless of others thereby failing their duty in supporting others according to their means. A muslim should always bear this in mind and strive to aid others as much as they can. This extends to beyond financial help and includes all verbal and physical help such as good and sincere advice.

Muslims should regularly observe the news and those who are in difficult situations all over the world. This will inspire them to avoid becoming self-centered and instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about themselves is lower in rank than an animal as even they care about their offspring. In fact, a muslim should be better than animals by practically caring for others beyond their own family.

Even though a muslim cannot remove all the problems of the world but they can play their part and help others according to their means as this is what Allah, the Exalted, commands and expects.

***“He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein...And they did not become divided until after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves...And indeed, those who were granted inheritance of the Scripture after them are, concerning it, in disquieting doubt.”***

The scholars from the children of Israel fell into disputes regarding the Torah as many of them desired leadership. They understood that the only way to achieve their goal was to separate from the main body so that they could create and lead their own faction. They achieved their goal by disputing over the Torah. As their attitude led to in-fighting, never-ending debates and contradictions in their religious teachings because of what they fabricated, the following generations turned away from religion out of aversion to their behaviour and contradictive religious teachings.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who obtains religious knowledge in order to show off to scholars, argue with others or attract attention to themselves will go to Hell.

Even though, the foundation of all good in both worldly and religious matters is knowledge Muslims must understand that knowledge will only benefit them when they firstly correct their intention. Meaning, they strive to obtain and act on knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted. All other

reasons will only lead to a loss of reward and even punishment if a muslim fails to sincerely repent.

In reality, knowledge is like rain water which falls on different types of trees. Some trees grow by this water in order to benefit others such as a fruit tree. Whereas, other trees grow by this water and become a nuisance to others such as a thorny tree. Even though, the rain water is the same in both cases but the outcome is very different. Similarly, religious knowledge is the same for people but if one adopts the incorrect intention then it will become a means of their destruction. Conversely, if one adopts the correct intention it will become a means of their salvation.

Muslims should therefore correct their intention in all matters as they will be judged on this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell will be a scholar who only obtained knowledge in order to show off to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

To conclude, only obtaining and acting on useful knowledge with the correct intention is true beneficial knowledge.

Whoever conceals knowledge without a valid reason will be bridled with fire on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi,

number 2649. Therefore, muslims must share the useful knowledge their gain with others. It is simply foolish not to as this is one of the righteous deeds which will benefit a muslim even after they die. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 241. Those who hoarded knowledge were forgotten by history but those who shared it with others became known as the scholars and teachers of mankind.

***“He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein...And they did not become divided until after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves...And indeed, those who were granted inheritance of the Scripture after them are, concerning it, in disquieting doubt.”***

The scholars from the children of Israel fell into disputes regarding the Torah as many of them desired leadership. They understood that the only way to achieve their goal was to separate from the main body so that they could create and lead their own faction. They achieved their goal by disputing over the Torah. As their attitude led to in-fighting, never-ending debates and contradictions in their religious teachings because of what they fabricated, the following generations turned away from religion out of aversion to their behaviour and contradictive religious teachings.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe

warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned

against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true muslim.

If a muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not

appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

***“He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein...And they did not become divided until after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves...And indeed, those who were granted inheritance of the Scripture after them are, concerning it, in disquieting doubt.”***

The scholars from the children of Israel fell into disputes regarding the Torah as many of them desired leadership. They understood that the only way to achieve their goal was to separate from the main body so that they could create and lead their own faction. They achieved their goal by disputing over the Torah. As their attitude led to in-fighting, never-ending debates and contradictions in their religious teachings because of what they fabricated, the following generations turned away from religion out of aversion to their behaviour and contradictive religious teachings.

A sign of hypocrisy is that a person spreads corruption in society. This negative characteristic affects all social levels beginning from a family unit and ending at the international level. This type of person dislikes seeing people uniting on good as this may cause the worldly status of others to increase beyond their own. This drives them to backbiting and slander in order to cause people to turn against each other. Their evil attitude destroys their own ties of kinship and when they observe other families who are happy it drives them to destroy their happiness also. They are fault finders who dedicate their time unveiling the mistakes of others in order to drag their social status down. They are the first people to begin gossiping about others and act deaf whenever good things are spoken about. Peace

and quiet disturbs them so they seek to create problems in order to entertain themselves. They fail to remember the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546. It advises that whoever covers the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will cover their faults. But whoever seeks out and unveils the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will expose their faults to the people. So in reality, this type of person is only unveiling their own faults to society even though they believe they are exposing the faults of others.

***“...Difficult for those who associate others with Allāh is that to which you invite them...”***

The truth is that each worshipper of false gods only worships their own desires. Their deities are just a physical manifestation of their desires which they worship. This is obvious as a person who worships a deity in the form of an idol knows that the lifeless idol cannot command them to live their life a certain way so the worshiper themselves decides how they imagine their lifeless idol would like them to live. And this code of conduct is based on nothing but their own desires. Therefore, their worship of their desires is the root of their worship. The influential and rich are more drowned in this mentality as they are aware that accepting the truth meaning, Islam, will force them to live according to a specific code of conduct which will prevent them from acting on their misguided desires. They advise others to follow them as they do not wish to lose their influence and authority. This is why history as shown they were the first to reject and oppose the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as

Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“...Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back [to Him].”***

This verse is connected to chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

*“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”*

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfil the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's day. A muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the

more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

***“...Allāh chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back [to Him].”***

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds He blesses their five senses so that they use them in obedience to Him. This righteous servant will very rarely commit sins. This increase in guidance has been indicated in Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

This muslim reaches the level of excellence which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when a muslim performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will guard their mind and body from sins. This is the one who when they speak they speak for Allah, the Exalted, when they are silent they are silent for Allah, the Exalted. When they act they act for Him and when they are still they are for His sake. This is an aspect of monotheism and understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this muslim's supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge

and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.

***“...Allāh chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back [to Him].”***

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a

Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“...And if not for a word that preceded from your Lord [postponing the penalty] until a specified time, it would have been concluded between them...”***

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

***“...And indeed, those who were granted inheritance of the Scripture after them are, concerning it, in disquieting doubt.”***

A root cause of this doubt is ignorance. Muslims must gain and act on religious knowledge themselves so that they guide the next generation to do the same.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“...And indeed, those who were granted inheritance of the Scripture after them are, concerning it, in disquieting doubt.”***

A root cause of this doubt is ignorance as this leads to weakness of faith. Muslims must gain and act on religious knowledge themselves so that they guide the next generation to do the same.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“...And indeed, those who were granted inheritance of the Scripture after them are, concerning it, in disquieting doubt.”***

This can only be prevented when the older generation leads by example.

In the early days of Islam to attend a gathering of Islamic knowledge one had to journey for days but now countless lectures can be found online. Yet, ignorance of the correct path has only increased since the passing of the righteous predecessors. This is because some have acquired knowledge by memorizing verses of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but have not used them to purify their character. Meaning, they did not act on their knowledge. Those who act like this will lose the power to affect the hearts of others through their advice. Some lecturers are like news bulletins that only provide information without stimulating others to act thereby failing in their duty to guide others through their God given knowledge. Non-muslims are mainly accepting Islam through their own research of Islam instead of observing a practical example of a successful muslim. One who desires to spread Islam and guide the next generation must make it their priority to purify their character through knowledge. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

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

When one acts in this way then a little correct knowledge will have a massive impact on themselves and others. Whereas, those who reject this correct attitude may possess more knowledge but it will have no positive effect on anybody. This type of person has been described in the Holy Quran. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

***“...And indeed, those who were granted inheritance of the Scripture after them are, concerning it, in disquieting doubt.”***

This also occurs when one blindly imitates their forefathers instead of gaining and acting on religious knowledge in order to obtain certainty of faith.

A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation.

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.

***“...And indeed, those who were granted inheritance of the Scripture after them are, concerning it, in disquieting doubt.”***

This also occurs when one blindly imitates their forefathers instead of gaining and acting on religious knowledge in order to obtain certainty of faith.

A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation. Blind imitation is even disliked within Islam.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

*“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”*

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five daily obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 15

فَلِذَلِكَ فَادَعُ<sup>ط</sup> وَأَسْتَقِمْ<sup>ط</sup> كَمَا أُمِرْتُ<sup>ط</sup> وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ<sup>ط</sup>  
أَهْوَاءَهُمْ<sup>ط</sup> وَقُلْ<sup>ط</sup> ءَامَنْتُ<sup>ط</sup> بِمَا أَنْزَلَ<sup>ط</sup> اللَّهُ<sup>ط</sup> مِنْ كِتَابٍ<sup>ط</sup>  
وَأُمِرْتُ<sup>ط</sup> لِأَعْدِلَ<sup>ط</sup> بَيْنَكُمْ<sup>ط</sup> اللَّهُ<sup>ط</sup> رَبُّنَا<sup>ط</sup> وَرَبُّكُمْ<sup>ط</sup> لَنَا<sup>ط</sup> أَعْمَلْنَا<sup>ط</sup>  
وَلَكُمْ<sup>ط</sup> أَعْمَلْتُمْ<sup>ط</sup> لَا حُجَّةَ<sup>ط</sup> بَيْنَنَا<sup>ط</sup> وَبَيْنَكُمْ<sup>ط</sup> اللَّهُ<sup>ط</sup> يَجْمَعُ<sup>ط</sup>  
بَيْنَنَا<sup>ط</sup> وَإِلَيْهِ<sup>ط</sup> الْمَصِيرُ<sup>ط</sup>



*“So to that [religion of Allah] invite, and remain on a right course as you are commanded and do not follow their inclinations but say, "I have believed in what Allah has revealed of scripture [i.e., the Qur’ān], and I have been commanded to do justice among you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us are our deeds, and for you your deeds. There is no [need for] argument between us and you. Allah will bring us together, and to Him is the [final] destination.”*

***“So to that [religion of Allah] invite, and remain on a right course as you are commanded...”***

Muslims must remember the very important position they have been appointed to by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the ambassadors of Islam. It is extremely important for muslims to fulfil this duty according to their potential. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many muslims today believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A muslim should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

In addition, this important position should remind muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted,

become angry with the muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

***“So to that [religion of Allah] invite, and remain on a right course as you are commanded...”***

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.

***“So to that [religion of Allah] invite, and remain on a right course as you are commanded...”***

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.

***“So to that [religion of Allah] invite...For us are our deeds, and for you your deeds. There is no [need for] argument between us and you...”***

The beauty of Islam is found in gentleness. This has been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3689. The Holy Quran even mentions that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, constantly lovingly accompanied the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, because of his gentleness and soft nature. Chapter 3 Alee 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...”*

The Arabs were infamous for being harsh hearted but due to the Holy Prophet Muhammad's, peace and blessings be upon him, soft temperament their tough hearts melted and thus they adopted this quality and became beacons to guide the rest of mankind. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4809, that the one who is deprived of gentleness is deprived of good. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 103:

*“...And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers...”*

This is a clear message to those who desire to spread the word of Islam. They must possess a gentle constructive mind set rather than a harsh destructive one. They should unite people and strive to benefit others rather than spreading controversy within society. A good example of this is seen in one's attitude towards their children. The parents that showed a gentle nature towards their children had a greater positive impact on them than the parents who adopted a harsh temperament. Often some push people further away from Islam with their harsh attitude and this completely challenges the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, once an uneducated Bedouin urinated in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, desired to punish him the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade them and gently explained to the Bedouin the etiquettes of being in a Mosque. This incident is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 529. This soft approach affected the man in a positive way.

This important characteristic is also mentioned in many places of the Holy Quran. For example, even though Pharaoh claimed to be the highest Lord yet Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Mosa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them both, to invite Pharaoh towards guidance using gentle and kind speech. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 24:

*“And said, “I am your most exalted lord.””*

and Chapter 20 Taha, verses 43-44:

*“Go, both of you, to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed. And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah].”*

Children and even animals understand the language of gentleness. So how can an adult not be guided correctly if one adopts this characteristic when inviting them towards Islam and good? This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6601, that Allah, the Exalted, is kind and gentle according to His infinite dignity and likes the creation to act softly with each other. Unfortunately, many who spread the word of Islam have adopted the incorrect belief that being gentle is a sign of weakness. This is nothing but a ploy of the Devil as he desires to lead mankind away from Islam.

***“So to that [religion of Allah] invite...For us are our deeds, and for you your deeds. There is no [need for] argument between us and you...”***

It is important for muslims to understand an important point in respect to advising others. It is the duty of muslims to advise others towards good and forbid evil but a muslim should not behave as if they have been put in charge as controllers over others. This attitude only leads to anger and bitterness especially, when others do not follow their advice. It is best for muslims to discharge their duty by advising others but they should avoid stressing over the outcome of their advice meaning, whether the person acts on their advice or not. If Allah, the Exalted, advised the greatest teacher and guide of mankind namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to stress over the outcome in many places of the Holy Quran how can a muslim claim or behave as if they have been put in charge of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

*“So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”*

The muslim who behaves as a controller will not only become bitter when people fail to follow their advice but it can lead them to giving up advising others which is a duty on all muslims according to their ability.

In addition, this attitude will also cause muslims to neglect themselves and their own duties as they are too busy concerning themselves with the duties of others. Therefore, muslims should remain firm in commanding good and forbidding evil but refrain from observing and bothering about the outcome of their advice.

***“So to that [religion of Allah] invite...For us are our deeds, and for you your deeds. There is no [need for] argument between us and you...”***

As all people have not been created the same they are bound to disagree on certain things. In matters related to religion and those which differentiate between lawful and unlawful things a muslim must remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of who challenges or disagrees with them. But in matters where the choice is between to lawful worldly options a muslim is entitled to offer their opinion to others when they are requested to. But they should not waste their time nor stress if others disagree with their opinion. When one holds onto these disagreements over time they can cause enmity to build up between people which can lead to fractured and broken relationships. This can even result in the sin of severing ties with people. So in cases like this it is important for muslims to let things go and not harbour a negative feeling towards someone who disagrees with their opinion and choice. They should instead push themself to agree to disagree and move on from the situation without any ill feelings. The one who fails to do this will find themself always arguing and possessing enmity for others as they are bound to disagree with others on certain topics and issues due to a difference in their characteristics and mentality. Understanding and acting on this advice is a branch of finding peace in this world.

***“So to that [religion of Allah] invite...For us are our deeds, and for you your deeds. There is no [need for] argument between us and you...”***

Even though commanding good and forbidding evil is an important duty on each muslim yet they will encounter people who do not seem to listen nor act on the advice given to them. This is quite obvious especially in this day and age. In cases like this it is best not to give up but to consider changing one's technique. Advising others through words is one way of commanding good and forbidding evil but a better way is to advise others through one's actions. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the greatest teacher as he advised others through his words and actions. This leading by example technique is important to adopt as it is more likely to affect others in a positive way. But those who still fail to accept this technique of commanding good and forbidding evil should be left alone. One should continue showing a practical example but perhaps take a step back from verbally advising them as continuously advising others who do not pay attention can cause both parties to become irritated and angered. This contradicts the very attitude a muslim should possess when they advise others towards good. It is a sad truth that one should not bother verbally imposing themself on people who do not care what they have to say. But they should continue advising others through their actions. In this way one not only helps themself by refining their own character but also fulfils their duty in commanding good and forbidding evil. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 17:

*“...enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.”*

***“So to that [religion of Allah] invite...For us are our deeds, and for you your deeds. There is no [need for] argument between us and you...”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever avoids arguing even if they are right will be given a house in the middle of Paradise.

It is important to understand that the characteristic of a true muslim is not to argue or debate in order to promote themselves and their opinion. They should instead present the information in order to promote the truth. This applies to both worldly and religious matters. The one who aims to promote the truth will not argue. Only the one who is trying to promote themselves will. Contrary to what many believe winning arguments does not increase one's rank in anyway. The only time one's rank in both worlds' increases is when they avoid arguing and instead present the truth or accept it when it is presented to them. A muslim should avoid going back and forth with others when discussing things as this is a characteristic of arguing. It is this correct mentality which has been indicated in Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 125:

***“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best...”***

A muslim should understand that their duty is not to force people to accept something. Their duty is to simply present the truth as being forceful is a characteristic of arguing.

A muslim should not waste their time nor stress if others disagree with their opinion. When one holds onto these disagreements over time it can cause enmity to build up between them and others, which can lead to fractured and broken relationships. This can even lead to the sin of severing ties with people. So in cases like this it is important for muslims to let things go and not harbour negative feelings towards someone who disagrees with their opinion and choice. They should instead push themselves to agree to disagree and move on from the situation without any ill feelings. The one who fails to do this will find themselves always arguing and possessing enmity for others as they are bound to disagree with others on certain topics and issues due to the difference in their characteristics and mentality. Understanding this principle is a branch of finding peace in this world.

***“...and remain on a right course as you are commanded and do not follow their inclinations...”***

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 remain on a right course as you are commanded and do not follow their inclinations...”***

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 remain on a right course as you are commanded and do not follow their inclinations...”***

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.

***“...and remain on a right course as you are commanded and do not follow their inclinations...”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after

work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“...but say, "I have believed in what Allāh has revealed of scripture [the Quran]...””***

True belief involves fulfilling its rights.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete

loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“...but say, "I have believed in what Allāh has revealed of scripture [the Quran]...””***

True belief involves fulfilling its rights.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“...and I have been commanded to do justice among you...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest as well as using each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach muslims to push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themselves harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.<sup>1</sup> So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”*

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. They should not be neglected nor handed over to others such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

***“...and I have been commanded to do justice among you...”***

One of the major reasons why society seems to be digressing is because people have abandoned acting justly. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6787, that previous nations were destroyed as the authorities would punish the weak when they broke the law but would pardon the rich and influential. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, being the head of state even declared in this Hadith that if his own daughter committed a crime he would enforce the full legal punishment on her. Even though members of the general public might not be in a position to advise their leaders to remain just in their actions but they can influence them indirectly by acting justly in all their dealings and actions. For example, a muslim must act justly in respect to their dependents, such as their children, by treating them equally. This has been specifically advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3544. They should act justly in all their business dealings irrespective of who they deal with. If people act with justice on an individual level then communities can change for the better and in turn those who are in influential positions, such as politicians, will act justly whether they desire to or not.

***“...Allāh is our Lord and your Lord...”***

This verse is connected to chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

*“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware.””*

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere 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.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a muslim has a choice between pleasing

Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments, enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person's heart indicates that it is a duty on muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a muslim. Certainty of faith allows a muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“...Allāh will bring us together, and to Him 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.

***“...Allāh will bring us together, and to Him 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.

***“...Allāh will bring us together, and to Him is the [final] destination.”***

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.

***“...Allāh will bring us together, and to Him is the [final] destination.”***

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.

***“...Allāh will bring us together, and to Him is the [final] destination.”***

Every muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they barely know him as they are too busy to study his life, character and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 16

وَالَّذِينَ يُحَاجُّونَ فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا اسْتُجِيبَ لَهُ،  
جُنُودَهُمْ دَاخِضَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ وَلَهُمْ  
عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ﴿١٦﴾

*“And those who argue concerning Allah after He has been responded to -  
their argument is invalid with their Lord, and upon them is [His] wrath, and  
for them is a severe punishment.”*

***“And those who argue concerning Allah after He has been responded to - their argument is invalid with their Lord, and upon them is [His] wrath, and for them is a severe punishment.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who guides others to something good will receive the same reward as those who act on their advice. And those who guide others to sins will be held accountable as if they committed the sins.

It is important for muslims to be careful when advising and guiding others. A muslim should only advise others in matters of good so that they gain reward from it and avoid advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. A person will not escape punishment on Judgment Day by simply claiming they are only inviting others towards sins even if they did not commit the sins themselves. Allah, the Exalted, will hold both the guide and the follower accountable for their actions. Muslims should therefore only advise others to do the things they would do themselves. If they dislike an action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

Because of this Islamic principle muslims should ensure they gain the adequate knowledge before advising others as they can easily multiply their own sins if they incorrectly advise others.

In addition, this principle is an extremely easy way for muslims to gain reward for actions they cannot perform themselves due to a lack of

means, such as wealth. For example, a person who is not financially able to donate charity can encourage others to do so and this will result in them gaining the same reward as the one who gave charity.

***“And those who argue concerning Allah after He has been responded to - their argument is invalid with their Lord, and upon them is [His] wrath, and for them is a severe punishment.”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who obtains religious knowledge in order to show off to scholars, argue with others or attract attention to themselves will go to Hell.

Even though, the foundation of all good in both worldly and religious matters is knowledge Muslims must understand that knowledge will only benefit them when they firstly correct their intention. Meaning, they strive to obtain and act on knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted. All other reasons will only lead to a loss of reward and even punishment if a Muslim fails to sincerely repent.

In reality, knowledge is like rain water which falls on different types of trees. Some trees grow by this water in order to benefit others such as a fruit tree. Whereas, other trees grow by this water and become a nuisance to others such as a thorny tree. Even though, the rain water is the same in both cases but the outcome is very different. Similarly, religious knowledge is the same for people but if one adopts the incorrect intention then it will become a means of their destruction. Conversely, if one adopts the correct intention it will become a means of their salvation.

Muslims should therefore correct their intention in all matters as they will be judged on this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell will be a scholar who only obtained knowledge in order to show off to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

To conclude, only obtaining and acting on useful knowledge with the correct intention is true beneficial knowledge.

Whoever conceals knowledge without a valid reason will be bridled with fire on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2649. Therefore, muslims must share the useful knowledge their gain with others. It is simply foolish not to as this is one of the righteous deeds which will benefit a muslim even after they die. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 241. Those who hoarded knowledge were forgotten by history but those who shared it with others became known as the scholars and teachers of mankind.

***“And those who argue concerning Allah after He has been responded to - their argument is invalid with their Lord, and upon them is [His] wrath, and for them is a severe punishment.”***

It is important for Muslims especially, in this day and age to understand the difference between those who discuss certain topics which may be considered controversial in order to genuinely benefit people through a positive change and those who simply discuss these issues in order to attract the attention of others. Those who desire a positive change in society will always show respect and good character towards others especially, to those they are challenging through their words. They never result to vulgar language or actions in order to declare their point of view. They instead study and understand the subject they are debating about without misinterpreting or falsifying information in order to support their point of view. Their criticism is always constructive and their genuine and sincere intention to improve the society is shown through their behaviour and words. These are the people who Muslims should pay attention to as if they are correct it will improve society for everyone. But if their viewpoint is wrong they will accept the truth when it is made clear to them by others. But those who behave opposite to this correct attitude, whether they are found in the media or anywhere else, should simply be ignored as they do not desire to improve the lives of people. They are starved for attention and like an infant act out in order to attract some attention from others. Muslims should not circulate and pass on videos or other content which are linked to people like this as they are playing right into their hands and giving them the attention they so badly desire. Debating with these people is a complete waste of time because of their evil intention and behaviour. Muslims should instead place their efforts in other useful places which benefit them and others in both worlds.

***“And those who argue concerning Allah after He has been responded to - their argument is invalid with their Lord, and upon them is [His] wrath, and for them is a severe punishment.”***

The scholars from the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) living in Medina were fully aware of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they had been described in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

*“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons...”*

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

*“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons...”*

It is important to note, that all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, came with the same religion, Islam – submission to Allah, the Exalted. The only thing they differed in were smaller issues but their core and fundamental teachings were one in the same. As the Holy Quran was in harmony with the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures there was no good reason why the people of the book should have rejected the Holy Quran and the one to whom it was given namely, the

Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, it was more appropriate for them to accept Islam as the scholars of the people of the book possessed knowledge which allowed them to recognize the truth easily.

In addition, the fact that the Holy Quran confirmed the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures meant that when one rejected the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they were in essence rejecting their previous divine scriptures and their Holy Prophets, such as the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon them, also.

After all these signs verifying the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, many of the scholars of the people of the book still concealed and misinterpreted their divine teachings out of envy and fear of losing the social status and wealth they had obtained as leaders of their societies.

For example, in the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This Christian delegation did not accept Islam but agreed to a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the delegation left Medina two brothers, Abu Haritha and Kurz Bin Alqama, were riding near each other. The mule of Abu Haritha stumbled and Kurz in frustration rebuked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indirectly. Abu Haritha in response rebuked him. When Kurz asked about his response Abu Haritha told him that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was

undoubtedly the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, they had been waiting for and who had been described in their divine scriptures. When Kurz asked him why he rejected Islam even though he knew it was the truth Abu Haritha replied that he did so because of the honor, wealth and authority their people had given them and he was afraid he would lose it all if he accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 75-76.

It is therefore vital for Muslims to avoid the excess love for wealth and social status. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a Muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a Muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they

are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true Muslim.

If a Muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated Muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This Muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

***“And those who argue concerning Allah after He has been responded to - their argument is invalid with their Lord, and upon them is [His] wrath, and for them is a severe punishment.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And those who argue concerning Allah after He has been responded to - their argument is invalid with their Lord, and upon them is [His] wrath, and for them is a severe punishment.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verses 17-18

اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْمِيزَانَ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ  
لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ قَرِيبٌ ﴿١٧﴾

يَسْتَعْجِلُ بِهَا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا  
مُشْفِقُونَ مِنْهَا وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهَا الْحَقُّ أَلا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ  
يُمَارُونَ فِي السَّاعَةِ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿١٨﴾

*“It is Allah who has sent down the Book in truth [with purpose] and [also] the balance [i.e., justice]. And what will make you perceive? Perhaps the Hour is near.*

*Those who do not believe in it [Judgement Day] are impatient for it, but those who believe are fearful of it and know that it is the truth. Unquestionably, those who dispute concerning the Hour are in extreme error.”*

***“It is Allah who has sent down the Book in truth [with purpose]...”***

The purpose of the Holy Quran is to guide a person to peace and success in both worlds. This will occur when one fulfils its rights.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“It is Allāh who has sent down...the balance [justice]...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest as well as using each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach muslims to push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themselves harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.<sup>1</sup> So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”*

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. They should not be neglected nor handed over to others such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

***“It is Allāh who has sent down...the balance [justice]...”***

One of the major reasons why society seems to be digressing is because people have abandoned acting justly. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6787, that previous nations were destroyed as the authorities would punish the weak when they broke the law but would pardon the rich and influential. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, being the head of state even declared in this Hadith that if his own daughter committed a crime he would enforce the full legal punishment on her. Even though members of the general public might not be in a position to advise their leaders to remain just in their actions but they can influence them indirectly by acting justly in all their dealings and actions. For example, a muslim must act justly in respect to their dependents, such as their children, by treating them equally. This has been specifically advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3544. They should act justly in all their business dealings irrespective of who they deal with. If people act with justice on an individual level then communities can change for the better and in turn those who are in influential positions, such as politicians, will act justly whether they desire to or not.

***“...And what will make you perceive? Perhaps the Hour is near.”***

In reality, when one dies their Judgement Day begins as they can no longer perform any good actions, such as sincere repentance. Therefore, even if the Day of Judgement might be considered far away by some, as some of its major signs have not occurred yet, death is certainly not far away from anyone.

Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The only way to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

***“...And what will make you perceive? Perhaps the Hour is near.”***

In reality, when one dies their Judgement Day begins as they can no longer perform any good actions, such as sincere repentance. Therefore, even if the Day of Judgement might be considered far away by some, as some of its major signs have not occurred yet, death is certainly not far away from anyone.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same

way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach Muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

*“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.” But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”*

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

***“...And what will make you perceive? Perhaps the Hour is near.”***

In reality, when one dies their Judgement Day begins as they can no longer perform any good actions, such as sincere repentance. Therefore, even if the Day of Judgement might be considered far away by some, as some of its major signs have not occurred yet, death is certainly not far away from anyone.

When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing. Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim they stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that they stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, muslims do not treat it

like one. Instead, they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.

***“...And what will make you perceive? Perhaps the Hour is near.”***

In reality, when one dies their Judgement Day begins as they can no longer perform any good actions, such as sincere repentance. Therefore, even if the Day of Judgement might be considered far away by some, as some of its major signs have not occurred yet, death is certainly not far away from anyone.

It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of the material world. Unfortunately, muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared.

It is important for muslims to understand that no matter how long they live life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A muslim only fails preparing for the hereafter correctly because of their pursuit of the excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities.

A muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“...And what will make you perceive? Perhaps the Hour is near.”***

Ignorance can cause one to ignore preparing for the Day of Judgement.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At

Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“...And what will make you perceive? Perhaps the Hour is near.”***

When one gains and acts on Islamic knowledge they will achieve certainty of faith. This includes being certain about the coming of the Day of Judgement.

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples

which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“...And what will make you perceive? Perhaps the Hour is near. Those who do not believe in it are impatient for it...Unquestionably, those who dispute concerning the Hour are in extreme error.”***

The non-muslims of Mecca would mockingly urge for the Day of Judgement to be hastened for them. They also foolishly claimed that as the exact time of its advent was not revealed to them this meant it was not going to occur.

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

***“...And what will make you perceive? Perhaps the Hour is near. Those who do not believe in it are impatient for it...Unquestionably, those who dispute concerning the Hour are in extreme error.”***

The non-muslims of Mecca would mockingly urge for the Day of Judgement to be hastened for them. They also foolishly claimed that as the exact time of its advent was not revealed to them this meant it was not going to occur.

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does

not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgment thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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.

***“...And what will make you perceive? Perhaps the Hour is near. but those who believe are fearful of it and know that it is the truth...”***

The one who truly believes in the Day of Judgement will practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“...And what will make you perceive? Perhaps the Hour is near. but those who believe are fearful of it and know that it is the truth...”***

The one who truly believes in the Day of Judgement will practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 19

اللَّهُ لَطِيفٌ بِعِبَادِهِ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْقَوِيُّ  
الْعَزِيزُ



*“Allah is Subtle with His servants; He gives provision to whom He wills. And He is the Powerful, the Exalted in Might.”*

***“Allah is Subtle with His servants...”***

This includes the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, whereby the wisdoms behind them are not obvious to people.

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.

***“Allah is Subtle with His servants...”***

This includes the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, whereby the wisdoms behind them are not obvious to people.

For example, parents often take away things or prevent their children from obtaining certain things such as unhealthy food in order to protect them. This behaviour often causes the child to become sad or angry as they are completely unaware of the wisdom behind the actions of their parent. This parental behaviour is something which is widely accepted in society and is rightfully believed to be a characteristic of a good and responsible parent. Similarly, in life people often lose or are prevented from obtaining certain worldly things by Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must understand that the same way parents keep harmful things away from their children even though their children do not understand the reason behind their choice similarly Allah, the Exalted, acts in this manner according to His infinite wisdom and knowledge in order to protect His servants even if people do not understand the wisdom behind His choices. Therefore, every time a muslim finds themselves in this situation they should reflect on this simple example, which no one would reject irrespective of their faith, so that they are inspired to remain patient and show gratitude for the divine protection Allah, the Exalted, has granted them. They should not act like an immature child by becoming angry and impatient as adults are meant to behave better than children. In fact, children are excused from behaving in such a manner as they lack knowledge and experience whereas adults should not lack this and will therefore be held accountable for their behaviour in both worlds.

***“Allah is Subtle with His servants...”***

This includes the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, whereby the wisdoms behind them are not obvious to people.

For example, 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.”*

***“Allah is Subtle with His servants; He gives provision to whom He wills...”***

This includes the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, whereby the wisdoms behind them are not obvious to people. This includes the distribution of worldly blessings amongst the creation.

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who contracts and expands. It can mean that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who contracts the life and provision of someone through tests and trials. And He is the only One who can expand these things through divine blessings and relief from difficulties. In each case, Allah, the Exalted, provides His servants with what is best for them. For example, the faith of some will only remain strong if their lives are contracted for if they reached a time of expansion they would step out of bounds which would lead them to Hell. Conversely, the faith of some will only remain strong if they experience expansion in life as difficulties can cause their faith to be shaken which causes impatience and can lead them to Hell. 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.”*

Therefore, the muslim who understands this divine name will be grateful for whatever situation they are experiencing knowing it is best for them and in

each case they will adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. During times of contraction they will remain patient and in times of expansion they will remain grateful. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the one who behaves in this manner will always obtain blessings in all situations.

One should act on this divine name by contracting away from all the things which displease Allah, the Exalted, and expand their efforts towards the things which please Allah, the Exalted. They should contract their own lives by minimising indulging in the excess of this material world and expand the lives of others by striving to benefit them according to their means.

***“...He gives provision to whom He wills...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Creator and Allocator of provision to the entire creation which they need to preserve their physical and spiritual constitutions. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the provision of the entire creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

The one who understands this divine name will rely on Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them as He has planned for them before they were created. They will prove this reliance by striving to gain lawful provision as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, while refraining from anything which is unlawful and doubtful.

It is important to note that as people require physical provision in the form of food and drink. Similarly, the soul of a muslim requires provision also. This provision strengthens it and leads it to eternal bliss. This provision is in the form of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The foundation of all this is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Therefore, muslims should strive to gain this important provision of the soul as well as provision for their physical body. Two elements should be remembered in this respect. Do not exert unlawful and unnecessary efforts in gaining one's guaranteed provision. And do not misuse or waste the provision one gains.

A muslim, should act on this divine name by fulfilling their duty by providing for their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. This includes providing them with both physical and spiritual provision through education. A muslim should also do the same for the needy according to their capacity without fearing poverty for themselves. They should remember the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893, which advises that Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the needs of the muslim who takes care of the needs of others.

***“...And He is the Powerful, the Exalted in Might.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who over powers all things, who in reality is the only One who possesses power and might. Anyone else who possesses strength only does so because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. There is no atom in this world or in the next that can escape the power and authority of Allah, the Exalted.

As all power belongs to Allah, the Exalted, a muslim should therefore always remember that the strength to perform righteous deeds and refrain from sins comes from Allah, the Exalted, alone. This will remove any chance of pride creeping into their heart. An atom's worth of which is enough to take a person to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Whoever desires for their faith to become mighty must obey the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be granted strong faith which will aid them to overcome all difficulties so that they leave this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. True obedience only lies in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. 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.”*

Truly Knowing Allah, the Exalted, is All Mighty should prevent a muslim from sinning. As they should know there is no way to escape the might of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, when a muslim engraves this divine name into their heart it prevents them from committing oppression and wronging others. They become fully aware that even if there is no person powerful enough to seek justice from them Allah, the Exalted, will certainly take them to account and punish them in both worlds. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, oppression to others may cause the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted, to hurl them into Hell on Judgment Day.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 20

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ  
كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ  
مِنْ نَصِيبٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

*“Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter - We increase for him in his harvest [i.e., reward]. And whoever desires the harvest [i.e., benefits] of this world - We give him thereof, but there is not for him in the Hereafter any share.”*

***“Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter - We increase for him in his harvest [i.e., reward]...”***

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6833, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever does a good deed will have a minimum of ten times reward.

Throughout Islamic teachings different amounts of reward have been declared for performing righteous deeds. Some teachings advise ten times reward like this Hadith, others seven hundred times and in some cases a reward which cannot be counted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 261:

*“The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills...”*

This varying reward is dependent on one's sincerity. The more sincere a person is the more they will be rewarded. Meaning, the more they perform the righteous deed for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, the more they will be rewarded. For example, the one who only acts to please Allah, the Exalted, without desiring a lawful worldly blessing will obtain more reward than the one who acts in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and seeks a lawful worldly blessing.

***“Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter - We increase for him in his harvest [reward]. And whoever desires the harvest [i.e., benefits] of this world - We give him thereof, but there is not for him in the Hereafter any share.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that those who perform deeds for the sake of people, such as showing off, instead of doing them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, will be told to gain their reward on Judgment Day from the people they acted for which in reality is not possible to do.

It is important to understand that the foundation of all deeds and even Islam itself is one's intention. It is the very thing which Allah, the Exalted, judges people on according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A muslim should ensure they perform all religious and useful worldly actions for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward from Him in both worlds. A sign of this correct mentality is that this person neither expects nor desires people to appreciate or show gratitude to them for the deeds they perform. If one desires this then it indicates their incorrect intention.

In addition, acting with the correct intention prevents sadness and bitterness as the one who acts for the sake of people will eventually encounter ungrateful people who will make them annoyed and bitter as they feel they wasted their effort and time. Unfortunately, this is seen in parents and relatives as they often fulfill their duties towards their children and relatives for their sake instead of for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted.

But the one who acts for the sake of Allah, the exalted, will fulfill all their duties towards others such as their children and never become bitter or enraged when they fail to show gratitude towards them. This attitude leads to peace of mind and general happiness as they know Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their righteous deed and will reward them for it. This is the way all Muslims must act otherwise they may well be left empty handed on the Day of Judgment.

***“Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter - We increase for him in his harvest [reward]. And whoever desires the harvest [i.e., benefits] of this world - We give him thereof, but there is not for him in the Hereafter any share.”***

The difference between the one who aims for the material world and the one who aims for the hereafter is how they use the blessings they have been granted. The more one uses these blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the more they aim for the hereafter. The one who aims for the hereafter will gain peace and success in both worlds. Whereas, the one who aims for the material world will lose out in the hereafter and the worldly things they obtained will become a curse and burden for 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.

***“Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter - We increase for him in his harvest [reward]. And whoever desires the harvest [i.e., benefits] of this world - We give him thereof, but there is not for him in the Hereafter any share.”***

The difference between the one who aims for the material world and the one who aims for the hereafter is how they use the blessings they have been granted. The more one uses these blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the more they aim for the hereafter. The one who aims for the hereafter will gain peace and success in both worlds. Whereas, the one who aims for the material world will lose out in the hereafter and the worldly things they obtained will become a curse and burden for them. 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.

***“Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter - We increase for him in his harvest [reward]. And whoever desires the harvest [i.e., benefits] of this world - We give him thereof, but there is not for him in the Hereafter any share.”***

The difference between the one who aims for the material world and the one who aims for the hereafter is how they use the blessings they have been granted. The more one uses these blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the more they aim for the hereafter. The one who aims for the hereafter will gain peace and success in both worlds. Whereas, the one who aims for the material world will lose out in the hereafter and the worldly things they obtained will become a curse and burden for them.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

***“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”***

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter - We increase for him in his harvest [reward]. And whoever desires the harvest [i.e., benefits] of this world - We give him thereof, but there is not for him in the Hereafter any share.”***

The difference between the one who aims for the material world and the one who aims for the hereafter is how they use the blessings they have been granted. The more one uses these blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the more they aim for the hereafter. The one who aims for the hereafter will gain peace and success in both worlds. Whereas, the one who aims for the material world will lose out in the hereafter and the worldly things they obtained will become a curse and burden for them.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter - We increase for him in his harvest [reward]. And whoever desires the harvest [i.e., benefits] of this world - We give him thereof, but there is not for him in the Hereafter any share.”***

The difference between the one who aims for the material world and the one who aims for the hereafter is how they use the blessings they have been granted. The more one uses these blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the more they aim for the hereafter. The one who aims for the hereafter will gain peace and success in both worlds. Whereas, the one who aims for the material world will lose out in the hereafter and the worldly things they obtained will become a curse and burden for them.

It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

*“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”*

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

***“Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter - We increase for him in his harvest [reward]. And whoever desires the harvest [i.e., benefits] of this world - We give him thereof, but there is not for him in the Hereafter any share.”***

The difference between the one who aims for the material world and the one who aims for the hereafter is how they use the blessings they have been granted. The more one uses these blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the more they aim for the hereafter. The one who aims for the hereafter will gain peace and success in both worlds. Whereas, the one who aims for the material world will lose out in the hereafter and the worldly things they obtained will become a curse and burden for them. In order to understand this reality one must adopt the correct understanding and perception in respect to this material world and the hereafter.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it

will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

***“Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter - We increase for him in his harvest [reward]. And whoever desires the harvest [i.e., benefits] of this world - We give him thereof, but there is not for him in the Hereafter any share.”***

The difference between the one who aims for the material world and the one who aims for the hereafter is how they use the blessings they have been granted. The more one uses these blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the more they aim for the hereafter. The one who aims for the hereafter will gain peace and success in both worlds. Whereas, the one who aims for the material world will lose out in the hereafter and the worldly things they obtained will become a curse and burden for them. In order to understand this reality one must adopt the correct understanding and perception in respect to this material world and the hereafter.

It is important for muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue

over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verses 21-23

أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ  
يَأْذَنَ بِهِ اللَّهُ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةُ الْفَصْلِ لَفُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ  
وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١﴾

تَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَهُوَ  
وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي  
رَوْضَاتِ الْجَنَّاتِ لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ  
ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٢٢﴾

ذَلِكَ الَّذِي يُبَشِّرُ اللَّهُ عِبَادَهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ  
قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَمَن يَقْتَرِفْ  
حَسَنَةً نَّزِدْ لَهُ فِيهَا حُسْنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

*“Or have they partners [i.e., other deities] who have ordained for them a religion to which Allah has not consented? But if not for the decisive word, it would have been concluded between them. And indeed, the wrongdoers will have a painful punishment.*

*You will see the wrongdoers fearful of what they have earned, and it will [certainly] befall them. And those who have believed and done righteous deeds will be in lush regions of the gardens [in Paradise] having whatever they will in the presence of their Lord. That is what is the great bounty.*

*It is that of which Allah gives good tidings to His servants who believe and do righteous deeds. Say, "I do not ask you for it [i.e., this message] any payment [but] only good will through [i.e., due to] kinship." And whoever commits a good deed - We will increase for him good therein. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Appreciative.”*

***“Or have they partners [i.e., other deities] who have ordained for them a religion to which Allah has not consented?...”***

The truth is that each worshipper of false gods only worships their own desires. Their deities are just a physical manifestation of their desires which they worship. This is obvious as a person who worships a deity in the form of an idol knows that the lifeless idol cannot command them to live their life a certain way so the worshiper themselves decides how they imagine their lifeless idol would like them to live. And this code of conduct is based on nothing but their own desires. Therefore, their worship of their desires is the root of their worship.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the

pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“Or have they partners [i.e., other deities] who have ordained for them a religion to which Allah has not consented?...”***

Blind imitation of one’s forefathers is a major reason why people reject the truth. A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation.

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.

***“Or have they partners [i.e., other deities] who have ordained for them a religion to which Allah has not consented?...”***

Blind imitation of one’s forefathers is a major reason why people reject the truth. A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation.

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.

***“Or have they partners [i.e., other deities] who have ordained for them a religion to which Allah has not consented?...”***

Blind imitation of one’s forefathers is a major reason why people reject the truth. A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Blind imitation is even disliked within Islam.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

*“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”*

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five daily

obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.

***“...But if not for the decisive word, it would have been concluded between them...”***

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

***“...And indeed, the wrongdoers will have a painful punishment. You will see the wrongdoers fearful of what they have earned, and it will [certainly] befall them...”***

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.

***“...And indeed, the wrongdoers will have a painful punishment. You will see the wrongdoers fearful of what they have earned, and it will [certainly] befall them...”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the

corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“...And indeed, the wrongdoers will have a painful punishment. You will see the wrongdoers fearful of what they have earned, and it will [certainly] befall them...”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be

thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“...And indeed, the wrongdoers will have a painful punishment. You will see the wrongdoers fearful of what they have earned, and it will [certainly] befall them...”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“...And those who have believed and done righteous deeds...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“...And those who have believed and done righteous deeds...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai,

number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“...And those who have believed and done righteous deeds...”***

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and

slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“...And those who have believed and done righteous deeds will be in lush regions of the gardens [in Paradise]...”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“...And those who have believed and done righteous deeds will be in lush regions of the gardens [in Paradise] having whatever they will in the presence of their Lord. That is what is the great bounty. It is that of which Allāh gives good tidings to His servants who believe and do righteous deeds...”***

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may

Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

***“...Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “I do not ask you for it [this message] any payment [but] only good will through [i.e., due to] kinship.”...”***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, only desired the non-muslims of Mecca to uphold the ties of kinship with him, an aspect of life they all believed in, by leaving him in peace to preach.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that those who perform deeds for the sake of people, such as showing off, instead of doing them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, will be told to gain their reward on Judgment Day from the people they acted for which in reality is not possible to do.

It is important to understand that the foundation of all deeds and even Islam itself is one’s intention. It is the very thing which Allah, the Exalted, judges people on according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A muslim should ensure they perform all religious and useful worldly actions for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward from Him in both worlds. A sign of this correct mentality is that this person neither expects nor desires people to appreciate or show gratitude to them for the deeds they perform. If one desires this then it indicates their incorrect intention.

In addition, acting with the correct intention prevents sadness and bitterness as the one who acts for the sake of people will eventually encounter ungrateful people who will make them annoyed and bitter as they feel they wasted their effort and time. Unfortunately, this is seen in parents and relatives as they often fulfill their duties towards their children and relatives for their sake instead of for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. But the one who acts for the sake of Allah, the exalted, will fulfill all their duties towards others such as their children and never become bitter or enraged when they fail to show gratitude towards them. This attitude leads to peace of mind and general happiness as they know Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their righteous deed and will reward them for it. This is the way all muslims must act otherwise they may well be left empty handed on the Day of Judgment.

***“...Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “I do not ask you for it [this message] any payment [but] only good will through [i.e., due to] kinship.”...”***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, only desired the non-muslims of Mecca to uphold the ties of kinship with him, an aspect of life they all believed in, by leaving him in peace to preach.

It is important for muslims to fulfil the rights people have over them, such as their parents, according to the teachings of Islam. But they should not do this for the sake of people nor should they go overboard in their duties by crossing the limits set by Allah, the Exalted. One should instead act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and stay within the limits set by Him when fulfilling their duties to others. For example, they should not disobey Allah, the Exalted, in the process of pleasing people. The problem with dedicating one's life and efforts to people, even if no sins are committed, is that a day will certainly come when this person will realise that they dedicated so much effort to people but in return obtained nothing significant from them, such as gratitude. This attitude leads to bitterness towards life and people. If one persists on this attitude they will eventually fail in their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and especially those duties towards people. On the other hand when one acts for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how little gratitude people show them they will not become bitter as they acted for and hope reward from Allah, the Exalted. If one's intention is sincere this will prevent bitterness as they seek payback for their efforts from Allah, the Exalted, not people. People might let them down through a lack of gratitude whereas Allah, the Exalted, will reward them beyond their expectations.

***“...Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “I do not ask you for it [this message] any payment [but] only good will through [i.e., due to] kinship.”...”***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, only desired the non-muslims of Mecca to uphold the ties of kinship with him, an aspect of life they all believed in, by leaving him in peace to preach.

Many people have come and gone who have stood up for some sort of cause whether it was to do with women's rights, human rights, the poor, or something else, yet only a small per cent of these people had a positive impact on society. The majority had no positive effect and instead became footnotes in history. One of the reasons for this is a lack of sincerity. If one turns the pages of history they will observe that those who acted with the correct intention meaning, to truly benefit society without any ulterior motives were granted success even if they were not muslims. Benefit to others is something Allah, the Exalted, loves and He therefore grants success to all those who sincerely strive for this end.

Those who did not achieve a positive effect on society lacked this good intention as they desired something else, such as fame. In most cases their bad intention is quite evident as their words and actions clearly contradict each other. For example, some claim to stand up for the rights of women then happily take part in advertising campaigns which show women to be nothing except ornaments to be gawked at. If their actions supported their claims they would have instead taught the advertising companies that a

woman's intelligence, good character and inner strength are what should be displayed to the world through their advertising campaigns.

Many of these people who claim to stand up for different causes are in a position of political and social influence and they possess much wealth yet, their positive influence on society is minimal and very short lived. On the other hand, those who may not have possessed such influence changed the attitude of millions through their sincerity. They only desired to benefit society; they did not seek anything else. Because of their sincerity their positive influence and remembrance endured long after they departed this world whereas, those whose intention was corrupt were quickly forgotten even while they were still alive.

So if one desires to succeed in the material world or more importantly in matters of faith they should strive to correct their intention. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, judges people based on their intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

***“...Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “I do not ask you for it [this message] any payment [but] only good will through [i.e., due to] kinship.”...”***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, only desired the non-muslims of Mecca to uphold the ties of kinship with him, an aspect of life they all believed in, by leaving him in peace to preach.

One of the main reasons why people who do good things, such as buying gifts for others, do not receive the same level of respect and love from people than some who do not do these things is because of their intention. When these people perform righteous deeds in respect to people, such as visiting the sick, they do so either for the sake of people meaning, to please them or they mix this intention by also aiming to please Allah, the Exalted. First of all, the one who acts for the sake of people will gain no reward from Allah, the Exalted. They will be told to gain their reward from the people they acted for on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Scholars are divided on whether those who mix their intention by aiming to please Allah, the Exalted, and people will receive a partial reward or none at all. In order to be on the safe side a wise muslim should only act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

On the other hand, the other people who gain more respect and love from others do so because they solely act for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. When they treat others kindly they do not do it for the sake of people. Because of their sincerity Allah, the Exalted, places more love and respect

in the hearts of the people compared to those who do more acts of kindness to people but are less sincere in their deeds.

So if people desire reward from Allah, the Exalted, and respect from people they should correct their intention and only perform righteous deeds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. One sign of this correct intention is that this person will aim to please Allah, the Exalted, even if it displeases people. Meaning, they do not pay attention to the attitude and reactions of people.

***“...Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “I do not ask you for it [this message] any payment [but] only good will through [i.e., due to] kinship.”...”***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, only desired the non-muslims of Mecca to uphold the ties of kinship with him, an aspect of life they all believed in, by leaving him in peace to preach.

Muslims often claim that as they are very busy in their worldly activities they find it difficult to do voluntary righteous deeds especially, those related to people, such as physically supporting someone. Even though muslims should strive to perform as much voluntary righteous deeds as possible as it will benefit them in both worlds whereas, their worldly activities will only benefit them in this world none the less, the least these muslims should do is adopt a neutral mentality towards others. This means that if a muslim cannot help others they should not hinder them in their lawful and good activities. If they cannot make others happy they should not make them sad. If they cannot make others laugh they should not make them cry. This can be applied to countless scenarios. This is important to understand as many muslims might do good to others, such as provide them emotional support, but at the same time they destroy their good deeds by being negative towards people. It is important to note, if a muslim is excessive in being negative towards others it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Having a neutral mentality is actually a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250.

To conclude, it is best to treat others in a positive way which is a sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. But if they cannot do this the least they should do is treat others in a neutral way. As treating others in a negative way may well lead to one's destruction.

***“...Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “I do not ask you for it [this message] any payment [but] only good will through [i.e., due to] kinship.”...”***

This verse could also mean that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not desire anything from the non-muslims of Mecca as he was only fulfilling his mission, an aspect of which was fulfilling the ties of kinship he had with them. The most important aspect of this is commanding good and forbidding evil.

Upholding the ties of kinship is a vital aspect of Islam which cannot be abandoned if one desires success in both worlds. A true sign of one’s faith is not spending all day worshipping Allah, the Exalted, in a Mosque but it is to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and to fulfill the rights of the creation. One of the most important rights of the creation is to uphold the ties of kinship. One can feign piety by dressing Islamically but they cannot deceive Allah, the Exalted. When one turns the pages of history they will always observe that the pious servants of Allah, the Exalted, maintained their ties of kinship. Even when their relative’s mistreated them they still responded with kindness. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6525, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, will always aid the one who strives to maintain their ties of kinship even if their relatives make things difficult for them.

Replying good with good is not special whereas, replying good to evil is the sign of a sincere believer. The former behavior is even seen in animals. In most cases, when one treats an animal kindly it will in turn show affection back. It is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5991, that the one who truly upholds the bonds of kinship is the one who maintains ties even when their relatives sever them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was constantly terrorized by most of his relatives but he always showed kindness towards them.

It is commonly known that one cannot achieve success without the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. But in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5987, Allah, the Exalted, has clearly declared that He will sever bonds with the one who cuts their ties of kinship over worldly reasons. Bear in mind, this is true irrespective of how much one struggles to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship such as, the obligatory prayers. If Allah, the Exalted, cuts ties with a muslim how can they achieve His closeness and eternal success?

In addition, in most cases Allah, the Exalted, delays the punishment of sins in order to give people the opportunity to repent. But breaking the ties of kinship over worldly reasons is punished swiftly. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4212.

Unfortunately, severing ties is commonly seen in the world today. People easily sever ties of kinship over petty worldly reasons. They fail to recognize that any loss which occurs in the material world is temporary but if they are disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, they will face prolonged suffering in both worlds.

A reason for breaking the ties of kinship which is commonly seen within the Islamic community is when one reaches a higher social status through their occupation. This inspires them to discard their relatives as they believe they are not worthy of interacting with them anymore. Their love for their wealth and social status pushes them to the doors of paranoia which convinces them that their relatives only wish to take their wealth from them.

The Holy Quran indicates that these bonds will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 1:

*“...And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever over you, an Observer.”*

This verse also clearly indicates that one cannot obtain piety without upholding the ties of kinship. So those who believe they can achieve it

through excess worship and fasting are proven wrong and must therefore change their behaviour.

Islam teaches muslims to uphold all ties of kinship by aiding their relatives in matters which are good whenever and wherever possible. They have been ordered to adopt a constructive mindset which unites relatives for the benefit of society rather than a destructive mentality which only causes divisions within families. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, creating divisions amongst people leads to one's destruction.

Those who sever their ties of kinship have been cursed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verses 22-23:

*“So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”*

How can one achieve their lawful desires in this world or in the next when they are encompassed with the curse of Allah, the Exalted, and deprived of His mercy?

Islam does not order one to go beyond their means in supporting their relatives nor does it ask them to sacrifice the limits of Allah, the Exalted, for their relatives as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. Therefore, one should never join their relatives in acts of evil. In this case, a muslim should command their relatives to do good and gently forbid them from evil while maintaining respect for them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

Countless benefits are obtained by the one who maintains the ties of kinship for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who maintains ties will be blessed with extra grace in their provision and in their life. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1693. This means that their provision irrespective of how little it is will be enough for them and it will provide them with peace of mind and body. Grace in life means they will find time to fulfill all their religious and worldly duties. These are two blessings muslims spend their whole life and wealth trying to obtain but many fail to recognize that Allah, the Exalted, has placed both of them in maintaining ties of kinship.

Maintaining ties of kinship is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered muslims to fulfill

this vital duty even with their non-muslim relatives. A Hadith advising this is found in Sahih Muslim, number 2324.

One of the traps of the Devil is that he aims to create dissension between relatives and within society which leads to broken families and social divisions. His ultimate goal is to weaken Islam as a nation. Unfortunately, some have become infamous for harboring grudges which go on for decades and pass on from generation to generation. A person will treat a relative well for decades but over one mistake and argument the latter will vow never to speak to them again. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6526, that it is unlawful for a muslim to cut off ties from another muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. If this is the command regarding severing ties with a non-relative can one imagine the seriousness of severing ties with relatives? This question has been answered in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that the one who severs ties with a relative over worldly reasons will not enter Paradise.

One must reflect on the verses and Hadiths which discuss this important topic and realize that if after decades of sins Allah, the Exalted, does not close His doors or sever links with people why do people so easily turn their backs on their relatives over small worldly issues? This must change if one desires for their connection to Allah, the Exalted, to remain intact.

***“...And whoever commits a good deed - We will increase for him good therein...”***

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 whoever commits a good deed - We will increase for him good therein...”***

This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“...And whoever commits a good deed - We will increase for him good therein...”***

This involves using the blessings one has 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 whoever commits a good deed - We will increase for him good therein...”***

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6833, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever does a good deed will have a minimum of ten times reward.

Throughout Islamic teachings different amounts of reward have been declared for performing righteous deeds. Some teachings advise ten times reward like this Hadith, others seven hundred times and in some cases a reward which cannot be counted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 261:

*“The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills...”*

This varying reward is dependent on one's sincerity. The more sincere a person is the more they will be rewarded. Meaning, the more they perform the righteous deed for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, the more they will be rewarded. For example, the one who only acts to please Allah, the Exalted, without desiring a lawful worldly blessing will obtain more reward than the one who acts in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and seeks a lawful worldly blessing.

***“...Indeed, Allāh is Forgiving...”***

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“...Indeed, Allāh is...Appreciative.”***

Allah, the Exalted, appreciates the sincere efforts of His servants and rewards them accordingly. This is an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who provided them with the knowledge, strength, inspiration and opportunity to obey Him yet, He still appreciates their efforts and rewards them for it. The muslim who understands this fact will be grateful by using the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This will lead to 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]...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by firstly appreciating the blessings Allah, the Exalted, has given them. This should be done through one's heart by acknowledging it and through correcting their intention so that they only act to please Allah, the Exalted. They should show gratitude through their words by praising Allah, the Exalted, and as mentioned earlier, through their actions by using the blessings they possess correctly according to the teachings of Islam.

In addition, they must show appreciation for the favours done by people. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has

warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954, that the one who is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah, the Exalted. Even though, the source of all blessings is no one except Allah, the Exalted, yet the creation conveys these blessings to a person. So being grateful to the messenger of the blessing is in fact being grateful to the Sender of the blessing namely, Allah, the Exalted. It is just like when an ambassador of a king is honored because they represent the king. If Allah, the Exalted, is appreciative of the efforts of His servants even though He is the source of their efforts how can a muslim believe they are somehow superior to showing appreciation to people for their favours? Grateful servants of Allah, the Exalted, are few as it involves abandoning one's desire and instead using each blessing according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This is the characteristic of the true servants of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 34 Saba, verse 13:

*“...And few of My servants are grateful.”*

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 24

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَىٰ اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ۗ فَإِن يَشَاءِ اللَّهُ يَخْتِمْ عَلَىٰ  
قَلْبِكَ وَيَمْحُ اللَّهُ الْبَاطِلَ وَيُحِقُّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ  
بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٢٤﴾

*“Or do they say, “He has invented about Allah a lie?” But if Allah willed, He could seal over your heart. And Allah eliminates falsehood and establishes the truth by His words. Indeed, He is Knowing of that within the breasts.”*

***“Or do they say, “He has invented about Allah a lie?” But if Allah willed, He could seal over your heart...”***

The non-Muslims of Mecca spent their lives with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and full-well knew he was no liar or madman. As they were masters of the Arabic language they full-well knew that the Holy Quran was not the words of a man.

For example, one of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, Walid Bin Mughira, once held a meeting with the other non-Muslim leaders of Mecca during the time of the Holy Pilgrimage. The Holy Pilgrimage did exist before the coming of Islam but the correct practices of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been completely changed. He advised the other leaders that soon many people would enter Mecca because of the Holy Pilgrimage and they will come across the message of Islam so they needed to unanimously agree on what to say about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to deter people from accepting Islam. Someone advised that they should label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a soothsayer. But Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not a soothsayer as he did not possess any of their crazy characteristics therefore people would not accept this. Another advised that they should tell people the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was crazy and was possessed by evil spirits. But Walid replied that it was obvious this was not true as these signs were not apparent in him. Finally, someone advised to label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a poet so that people would not pay attention to what he says. But again Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Quran or his speech were not poetry as the Arabs

were masters of poetry. Walid advised everyone to claim that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a sorcerer whose goals were to cause separation between people and their religion and divisions within families. After agreeing to this plan they dispersed and waited for people to flood into Mecca for the Holy Pilgrimage and warned them not to pay attention to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they claimed he was a sorcerer. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 362.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was reciting truthful historical accounts and beneficial lessons even though he was unlettered and had not studied the previous divine scriptures, which the non-Muslims of Mecca full well knew, was a clear sign of his Prophethood.

This was supported by the fact that they themselves testified to his sincerity and honesty. In fact, during his childhood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always under the protection of Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the evils that were widespread during the age of ignorance: the time before Islam. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached maturity he was the finest person among his people, the best of them in character and repute, the best of neighbours, the most prudent, the most honest in speech and most trustworthy. He was completely removed from immorality and other evil characteristics. Because of this he became known among the people of Mecca as Al Amin, the trustworthy. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, The Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 180.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spent his entire life amongst the non-Muslims of Mecca was enough of a proof of his declaration of Prophethood. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, invited the non-Muslims of Mecca to embrace Islam he used his 40 years amongst them as proof that he was speaking the truth. This evidence was undeniable even by the non-Muslims. This incident is recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4553. Only the arrogance of some prevented them from submitting to the truth. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

*“...for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?”*

***“Or do they say, “He has invented about Allah a lie?” But if Allah willed, He could seal over your heart...”***

Generally speaking, the one who turns away from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and instead follows falsehood will have their spiritual heart sealed.

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in

evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“...And Allāh eliminates falsehood and establishes the truth by His words...”***

The one who sincerely obeys and follows the Holy Quran will establish the truth in their life. This truth will benefit them in both worlds.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete

loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“...And Allāh eliminates falsehood and establishes the truth by His words...”***

The one who sincerely obeys and follows the Holy Quran will establish the truth in their life. This truth will benefit them in both worlds.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed the importance of truthfulness and avoiding lies. The first part advises that truthfulness leads to righteousness which in turn leads to Paradise. When a person persists on truthfulness they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a truthful person.

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of

Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

***“...And Allāh eliminates falsehood and establishes the truth by His words [decrees]...”***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, there are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But there are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

*“Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”*

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He

deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

***“...Indeed, He is Knowing of that within the breasts.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 25

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَقْبَلُ لِنُوبَةٍ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَعْفُو عَنِ السَّيِّئَاتِ  
وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

*“And it is He who accepts repentance from His servants and pardons misdeeds, and He knows what you do.”*

***“And it is He who accepts repentance from His servants...”***

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 it is He who accepts repentance from His servants...”***

A divine Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3540, advises the importance and vastness of the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. The first part of the Hadith declares that as long as a muslim sincerely supplicates to Allah, the Exalted, and hope's in His mercy they will be forgiven by Him.

This response has in fact been guaranteed for all lawful supplications in the Holy Quran not just for the supplication of forgiveness. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

*“And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you.” ...”*

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned this verse and declared that supplication is an act of worship meaning, a righteous deed. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1479. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604, advises that every supplication is accepted in different ways as long as it is a lawful one. The person is either granted what they requested or a reward will be reserved for them in the hereafter or they will be forgiven an equivalent sin. But it is important to note, that in order to receive a positive response a muslim must fulfil the conditions and the etiquettes of the supplication.

One of the greatest supplications a muslim can make is for forgiveness as it is a means for one obtaining blessings, avoiding difficulties in this world and a means to obtaining Paradise and escaping Hell in the next world. Chapter 71 Nuh, verses 10-12:

*“And said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in [continuing] showers. And give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers.’”*

As indicated by the main Hadith under discussion having hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, when supplicating is a condition for forgiveness. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, acts according to His servant's opinion of Him, which has been confirmed in a divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

One of the greatest causes of forgiveness is when a muslim only hopes in Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them full well knowing no one can forgive them or protect them from punishment except Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that no matter how many sins a person commits the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is greater. In fact, it is unlimited therefore a person's

limited sins will never be able to overcome it. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to magnify what they supplicate for as nothing is too great for Allah, the Exalted, to grant. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6812.

The next part of the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of sincerely seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, which has been mentioned in many verses and other Hadiths. This act of seeking forgiveness is a part of sincere repentance. It can be understood that seeking forgiveness is an act of the tongue while the rest of sincere repentance involves turning away from the sin through actions. It also includes feeling genuine remorse, making a firm promise not to commit the 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, that not persisting on the same sin is a condition for the repentance to be accepted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 135:

*“And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know.”*

It is extremely important for a muslim to be persistent in seeking forgiveness as this leads to deliverance from every worry, a way out from every difficulty and support from places where one would not expect. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1518.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the greatest cause of forgiveness namely, not associating anything to Allah, the Exalted. There are two types of associating things with Allah, the Exalted: major polytheism and minor polytheism. The major type is when one worships things other than Allah, the Exalted, or in addition to Him. The minor version is when one acts for the sake of anyone except Allah, the Exalted, such as showing off. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. In fact, the one who acts for the sake of people will be told by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day to seek their reward from those they acted for, which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. The one who acts in this way will find that they will eventually be exposed in this world and no matter how well they treat others they will never gain their real love or respect because of their bad intention. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6705.

When one realises the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, they only think, act and speak for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, out of fear and love for Him. This behaviour minimises the chances of committing sins and whatever sins do occur will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. It is the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3797, that the statement there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, removes all wrong actions.

This is the behaviour all muslims must strive to adopt. The foundation of it is fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

***“And it is He who accepts repentance from His servants and pardons misdeeds...”***

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“...and He knows what you do.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 26

وَيَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَيَزِيدُهُم مِّنْ  
فَضْلِهِ ؕ وَالْكَافِرُونَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

*“And He responds to those who have believed and done righteous deeds and increases [for] them from His bounty. But the disbelievers will have a severe punishment.”*

***“And He responds to those who have believed and done righteous deeds...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who answers all supplications by either fulfilling one's requests, removing an equivalent sin from their book of deeds or by saving reward for them in the hereafter as long as the etiquettes and conditions of a supplication are fulfilled. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604. Allah, the Exalted, is in fact far too generous and shy to turn away a beggar from His door empty handed. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3556.

The muslim who understands this divine name will persist on supplicating to Allah, the Exalted, and never give up hope of an answer. They will strive to fulfil all the conditions and etiquettes of a supplication in order to guarantee its acceptance.

A muslim must act on this divine name by fulfilling the good requests of people. In fact, a Hadith found in Shama'il At Tirmidhi, number 335, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never turned someone down when asked for something good.

***“And He responds to those who have believed and done righteous deeds...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“And He responds to those who have believed and done righteous deeds...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“And He responds to those who have believed and done righteous deeds...”***

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified

sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“And He responds to those who have believed and done righteous deeds...”***

This verse indicates the conditions of truly hoping in Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey 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 whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their

desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

A specific type of wishful thinking which affected the past nations and even the muslim nation is when a person believes that they can ignore the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, and somehow someone on the Day of Judgement will intercede for them and save them from Hell. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact and has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less even with his intercession some muslims whose punishment will be reduced by it will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil convinces those who do not believe in Judgement Day that even if it occurs they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on that day by claiming that they were not so bad as they avoided major crimes such as murder. They have convinced themselves that their pleas will be accepted and they will be sent to Paradise even though they disbelieved in Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. This is incredibly foolish as Allah, the Exalted, will not treat the person who believed in Him and tried to obey him

like the one who disbelieved in Him. A single verse has erased this type of wishful thinking. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

*“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”*

***“And He responds to those who have believed and done righteous deeds and increases [for] them from His bounty...”***

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6833, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever does a good deed will have a minimum of ten times reward.

Throughout Islamic teachings different amounts of reward have been declared for performing righteous deeds. Some teachings advise ten times reward like this Hadith, others seven hundred times and in some cases a reward which cannot be counted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 261:

*“The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills...”*

This varying reward is dependent on one's sincerity. The more sincere a person is the more they will be rewarded. Meaning, the more they perform the righteous deed for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, the more they will be rewarded. For example, the one who only acts to please Allah, the Exalted, without desiring a lawful worldly blessing will obtain more reward than the one who acts in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and seeks a lawful worldly blessing.

***“And He responds to those who have believed and done righteous deeds and increases [for] them from His bounty. But the disbelievers will have a severe punishment.”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“And He responds to those who have believed and done righteous deeds and increases [for] them from His bounty. But the disbelievers will have a severe punishment.”***

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a muslim is in danger of dying as a non-muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

*“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”*

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

***“And He responds to those who have believed and done righteous deeds and increases [for] them from His bounty. But the disbelievers will have a severe punishment.”***

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“And He responds to those who have believed and done righteous deeds and increases [for] them from His bounty. But the disbelievers will have a severe punishment.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only

this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“And He responds to those who have believed and done righteous deeds and increases [for] them from His bounty. But the disbelievers will have a severe punishment.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2559, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Paradise is surrounded by hardships and Hell is surrounded by desires.

This means the path which leads to Paradise contains difficulties and hardships. In most cases, a person cannot obtain good in this world without going through some sort of difficulty, such as exerting one's energy, then how can one believe they can obtain Paradise without facing difficulties? If one turns the pages of history they will observe the righteous always faced difficulties but as they knew the path of Paradise contained difficulties they maintained their focus on the destination instead of the difficulties. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that no one had been tested more than him in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472. Therefore, muslims must realize a fact that facing some difficulties in this world is an extremely small price to pay to obtain the permanent bliss of Paradise. Therefore, they should remain patient through all difficulties while focusing on the destination.

The path to Hell is full of desires. This indicates the importance of maintaining one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, at all times by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Even though it is not unlawful to enjoy lawful pleasures in this world a muslim should minimize these as much as possible as these lawful

desires often lead to unlawful desires. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who behaves in such a manner will safe guard their faith and honor. A muslim should never obey their desires or the desires of others if it means they will disobey Allah, the Exalted, as the pleasure of fulfilling desires vanishes quickly whereas the regret and the potential punishment will last long.

To conclude, a desire fulfilled will not make one feel better if they end up in Hell. And a difficulty one faces will not make them feel bad if they end up in Paradise.

***“...But the disbelievers will have a severe punishment.”***

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for.

One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“...But the disbelievers will have a severe punishment.”***

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freed has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows

up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“...But the disbelievers will have a severe punishment.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 27

﴿ وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَغَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَٰكِن يُنزِلُ بِقَدَرٍ مَّا يَشَاءُ ۚ إِنَّهُ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴾

*“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Aware and Seeing.”*

***“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who contracts and expands. It can mean that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who contracts the life and provision of someone through tests and trials. And He is the only One who can expand these things through divine blessings and relief from difficulties. In each case, Allah, the Exalted, provides His servants with what is best for them. For example, the faith of some will only remain strong if their lives are contracted for if they reached a time of expansion they would step out of bounds which would lead them to Hell. Conversely, the faith of some will only remain strong if they experience expansion in life as difficulties can cause their faith to be shaken which causes impatience and can lead them to Hell. 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.”*

Therefore, the muslim who understands this divine name will be grateful for whatever situation they are experiencing knowing it is best for them and in each case they will adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. During times of contraction they will remain patient and in times of expansion they will remain grateful. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the one who behaves in this manner will always obtain blessings in all situations.

One should act on this divine name by contracting away from all the things which displease Allah, the Exalted, and expand their efforts towards the things which please Allah, the Exalted. They should contract their own lives by minimising indulging in the excess of this material world and expand the lives of others by striving to benefit them according to their means.

***“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills...”***

Parents often take away things or prevent their children from obtaining certain things such as unhealthy food in order to protect them. This behaviour often causes the child to become sad or angry as they are completely unaware of the wisdom behind the actions of their parent. This parental behaviour is something which is widely accepted in society and is rightfully believed to be a characteristic of a good and responsible parent. Similarly, in life people often lose or are prevented from obtaining certain worldly things by Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must understand that the same way parents keep harmful things away from their children even though their children do not understand the reason behind their choice similarly Allah, the Exalted, acts in this manner according to His infinite wisdom and knowledge in order to protect His servants even if people do not understand the wisdom behind His choices. Therefore, every time a muslim finds themselves in this situation they should reflect on this simple example, which no one would reject irrespective of their faith, so that they are inspired to remain patient and show gratitude for the divine protection Allah, the Exalted, has granted them. They should not act like an immature child by becoming angry and impatient as adults are meant to behave better than children. In fact, children are excused from behaving in such a manner as they lack knowledge and experience whereas adults should not lack this and will therefore be held accountable for their behaviour in both worlds.

***“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Creator and Allocator of provision to the entire creation which they need to preserve their physical and spiritual constitutions. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the provision of the entire creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

The one who understands this divine name will rely on Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them as He has planned for them before they were created. They will prove this reliance by striving to gain lawful provision as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, while refraining from anything which is unlawful and doubtful.

It is important to note that as people require physical provision in the form of food and drink. Similarly, the soul of a muslim requires provision also. This provision strengthens it and leads it to eternal bliss. This provision is in the form of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The foundation of all this is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Therefore, muslims should strive to gain this important provision of the soul as well as provision for their physical body. Two elements should be remembered in this respect. Do not exert unlawful and unnecessary efforts in gaining one's guaranteed provision. And do not misuse or waste the provision one gains.

A muslim, should act on this divine name by fulfilling their duty by providing for their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. This includes providing them with both physical and spiritual provision through education. A muslim should also do the same for the needy according to their capacity without fearing poverty for themselves. They should remember the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893, which advises that Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the needs of the muslim who takes care of the needs of others.

***“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2886, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, criticized the slaves of wealth and fine clothing. These people are pleased when they receive these things and become displeased when they do not.

In reality, this applies to all non-essential worldly things. This criticism is not directed at those who strive in the material world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted. But it is directed at those who either pursue the unlawful in order to obtain wealth and other worldly things in order to satisfy their desires and the desires of others. And it is directed at those who pursue non-essential lawful things in such a way that it causes them to neglect obeying Allah, the Exalted, correctly. This obedience involves 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. This prevents them from preparing adequately for the hereafter and their final judgment.

In addition, this criticism is for those who are impatient when they do not obtain their unnecessary desires in this world. This attitude can cause a muslim to obey Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, they obey Him when they obtain their desires but when they do not they angrily turn away

from His obedience. The Holy Quran has warned of a severe loss in both worlds for the one who adopts this attitude. 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.”*

Muslims should instead learn to be patient and content with what they possess as this is true richness according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2420. In reality, the person full of desires is needy meaning, poor even if they possess much wealth. A muslim should know Allah, the Exalted, grants people what is best for them and not according to their desires as this in most cases would lead to their destruction.

***“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills...”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other

people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true muslim.

If a muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this

destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

***“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that he did not fear poverty for the muslim nation. Instead he feared that the world would become easy to obtain and plentiful for them. This would cause them to compete for it which would lead to their destruction as this same competition destroyed the previous nations.

It is important to understand that this does not only apply to wealth. But this warning applies to all aspects of people's worldly desires which can be encompassed by the desire for fame, wealth, authority and the social aspects of one's life, such as family, friends and a career. Whenever one aims to fulfil their desires by pursuing these things, even if they are lawful, beyond their needs it will distract them from preparing for the hereafter. It will lead them to bad character such as being wasteful and extravagant and may even take them towards sins in order to obtain these things. Failing to obtain them may lead to impatience and other acts of defiance and disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious these desires have taken control over many muslims as they would happily get up in the middle of the night in order to obtain these things such as wealth or go on a holiday but will fail to do so when advised to offer the voluntary night prayer or attend the morning obligatory prayer at the Mosque with congregation.

There is no harm in obtaining these things as long as they are lawful and required in order to fulfil a person's needs and the needs of their dependents. But when a person goes beyond this then they will become preoccupied with them at the loss of their hereafter as the more one pursues their desires the less they will strive in preparing for the hereafter. And therefore, the warning given in this Hadith will apply to them.

***“...Indeed He is, of His servants, 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.

***“...Indeed He is, of His servants...Seeing.”***

Nothing irrespective of its size and location is out of the reach of the divine sight and hearing of Allah, the Exalted.

The muslim who understands this divine name will be extremely cautious in their actions and speech. The same way one becomes vigilant over their actions when they are in the hearing and seeing range of someone they respect or fear a true muslim will be vigilant over their behaviour knowing no word or action escapes Allah, the Exalted. In fact, acting in this way is the high level of faith which has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. If one remains steadfast on this behaviour then they will eventually reach excellence of faith whereby they perform acts, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted, constantly watching their inner and outer being. This attitude will prevent sins and encourage one to sincerely perform righteous deeds.

In addition, this divine name encourages muslims never to give up hope whenever they face a difficulty thereby believing no one is aware or even cares about them. Allah, the Exalted, undoubtedly hears and sees their distress and will respond at the time which is best for His servant. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

*“And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by using these two senses in the way commanded by Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, one should not observe unlawful and vain things nor should they listen to unlawful and vain things. They should instead use them in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to avoid vain things as they are often the first step to the unlawful. This is achieved by acting on the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502. It advises that when one fulfils the commands of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to the obligatory duties and then strives in voluntary righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, He empowers their senses such as their sight and hearing so that they only use them in accordance to His desire and pleasure.

***“...Indeed He is, of His servants...Seeing.”***

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of Ihsan, which can be translated to mean excellence. This excellence refers to one's conduct and behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Acting with excellence has been mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as chapter 10 Yunus, verse 26:

*“For them who have done excellent is the best [reward] - and extra...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has explained this verse in Hadiths found in Sahih Muslim, numbers 449 and 450. The word extra in this verse refers to when the inhabitants of Paradise will be blessed with the divine vision of Allah, the Exalted. This reward befits the muslim who acts with excellence. As excellence means to lead one's life as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted, observing their outer and inner being at all times. A person who can observe a powerful authority watching them will never misbehave out of awe of them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised someone to always behave as if they were constantly being observed by a righteous man they respected. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, number 5539.

Whoever acts in this manner will very rarely commit sins and always hasten towards good deeds. This attitude creates the fear of Allah, the Exalted, and acts as a shield from the fire of trials in this world and the fire of Hell in the hereafter. This vigilance will ensure one not only fulfills all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, but it also encourages them to fulfill their responsibilities towards the creation. The peak of which is to sincerely treat others with kindness. This person will fulfill the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 251, which advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This level of excellence ensures one acts with the right intention, which is the foundation of faith according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Success is guaranteed for the one who performs good deeds and demonstrates good behavior with the right intention namely, to please Allah, the Exalted. The more excellent a person acts the stronger their faith becomes until they become a muslim who is far from heedlessness and is always struggling to beautify their hereafter and worldly life according to the teachings of Islam.

It is feared that the opposite of this reward will be given to those who turned away from Allah, the Exalted. As they lived without fearing the all-encompassing gaze of Allah, the Exalted, they will be veiled from seeing Him in the hereafter. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 15:

*“No! Indeed, from their Lord, that Day, they will be partitioned.”*

Those who fail to reach the level of acting as if they witness Allah, the Exalted, must act on the second part of the advice given in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning. This person should sincerely believe that Allah, the Exalted, is constantly observing them. Even though this state is lower in rank than the one who acts as if they observe Allah, the Exalted, none the less, it is a great way of adopting true fear of Allah, the Exalted. As mentioned earlier this attitude will prevent one from committing sins and encourage them towards good deeds. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in Imam Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, number 7935, the one who strives to adopt this mentality will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

The divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, is mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 4:

*"...He is with you wherever you are. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing."*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised to adopt the true awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, in many Hadiths. For example, in one divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He is with whoever remembers Him. This is the reason why it has been reported in Hilyat Al Awliya, volume 1, pages 84 and 85, about the Commander of the Faithful, Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, that he shied away from the glitter and pomp of the material world and only found solace in the

lonely night. Meaning, he sought the companionship of Allah, the Exalted, rather than the companionship of people.

Adopting the awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, not only prevents sins and encourages good deeds but it also prevents loneliness and depression. A person is very rarely affected by mental health issues when they are constantly surrounded by a person who loves them and aids them. No one loves the creation more than Allah, the Exalted, and there is no doubt that He is the source of all aid. Therefore, acting with excellence benefits one's faith, actions, emotional state and the wider society.

A muslim must avoid becoming like those who treat Allah, the Exalted, as the most insignificant of those who observe them. This is a serious spiritual illness which leads to all types of sins and evil behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 28

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا وَيَنْشُرُ  
رَحْمَتَهُ، وَهُوَ الْوَلِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٢٨﴾

*“And it is He who sends down the rain after they had despaired and spreads His mercy. And He is the Protector, the Praiseworthy.”*

***“And it is He who sends down the rain after they had despaired and spreads His mercy...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Creator and Allocator of provision to the entire creation which they need to preserve their physical and spiritual constitutions. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the provision of the entire creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

The one who understands this divine name will rely on Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them as He has planned for them before they were created. They will prove this reliance by striving to gain lawful provision as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, while refraining from anything which is unlawful and doubtful.

It is important to note that as people require physical provision in the form of food and drink. Similarly, the soul of a muslim requires provision also. This provision strengthens it and leads it to eternal bliss. This provision is in the form of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The foundation of all this is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Therefore, muslims should strive to gain this important provision of the soul as well as provision for their physical body. Two elements should be remembered in this respect. Do not exert unlawful and unnecessary efforts in gaining one's guaranteed provision. And do not misuse or waste the provision one gains.

A muslim, should act on this divine name by fulfilling their duty by providing for their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. This includes providing them with both physical and spiritual provision through education. A muslim should also do the same for the needy according to their capacity without fearing poverty for themselves. They should remember the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893, which advises that Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the needs of the muslim who takes care of the needs of others.

***“And it is He who sends down the rain after they had despaired and spreads His mercy...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is infinitely bountiful and bestows favours and blessings without recompense or external cause. He gives generously without being asked.

The muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to 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]...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by bestowing the blessings they have been given to others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. The one who gives to others will be given more than they could have ever imagined. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.”*

***“...And He is the Protector...”***

Allah, the Exalted, safeguards and preserves the creation and takes care of them with special care. He protects the obedient from the plots and traps of the Devil and He safeguards the disobedient from His immediate punishment in order to give them an opportunity to sincerely repent.

A muslim should act on this divine name by using the means provided to them by Allah, the Exalted, but always trust in His divine care and choices in every situation and outcome they face even if they do not observe the wisdom behind some choices. This inspires patience and even contentment with the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

*“...And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him...”*

A muslim should also understand that they will only be protected from misguidance and punishment by the Guardian namely, Allah, the Exalted. This removes any signs of pride and ensures they seek His protection through sincere obedience to Him. A muslim must act on this divine name by safeguarding every trust they possess such as their blessings by using them according to the teachings of Islam. They should safeguard their actions and speech from the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This will

ensure they receive more blessings from 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]...”*

***“...He is...the 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.”*

***“...He is...the Praiseworthy.”***

All praise is only for Allah, the Exalted, as He created and continuously sustains the entire creation within the Heavens and Earth without any progeny, partner, or helper. His kindness in the form of countless blessings, such as faith, to the creation has no limits. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 18:

*"And if you should count the favors of Allah, you could not enumerate them...."*

Therefore, the creation should constantly praise Him through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Allah, the Exalted, is worthy of all praise, as He is full of perfection in terms of attributes and characteristics which are free from all shortcomings. This is still true even if He did not bestow any blessings on the creation. In addition, praising Allah, the Exalted, with the tongue and actions through sincere obedience is a means to increase the blessings one receives. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

A muslim should praise Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible as it is has been declared the best supplication by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3800. In addition, this verse reminds mankind that whatever praise-worthy quality a person observes in the creation or within themselves is only possible because Allah, the Exalted, granted it. Therefore, all praise returns and solely belongs to Allah, the Exalted.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 29

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَثَّ فِيهِمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى جَمْعِهِمْ إِذَا يَشَاءُ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

*“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth and what He has dispersed throughout them of creatures. And He, for gathering them when He wills, is competent.”*

***“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth...”***

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

***“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth and what He has dispersed throughout them of creatures. And He, for gathering them when He wills, is competent.”***

When Allah, the Exalted, created creatures from nothing and dispersed them over the world then resurrecting them from dust and bones will be easier for Him.

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His

creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 30

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ فِيمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ  
وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

*“And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much.”*

***“And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much.”***

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 492, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a muslim does not face any type of physical difficulty, irrespective of its size, such as a prick of a thorn, or any emotional difficulty, such as stress, except Allah, the Exalted, erases their sins because of it.

This refers to minor sins as major sins require sincere repentance. This outcome occurs when a muslim remains patient from the onset of the difficulty until the end of their life. This is important to understand as many people believe they can complain initially and then show patience after. This is not true patience instead it is only acceptance which occurs with the passing of time. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1870. In addition, patience needs to be shown throughout one's life as a person can destroy their reward by showing impatience down the line.

A muslim should remember that it is far better to have their minor sins erased through these difficulties then to reach the Day of Judgment while still possessing them. A muslim should constantly repent and strive to perform righteous deeds in order to erase their minor sins. And if they encounter any physical or emotional difficulties they should remain patient hoping for their minor sins to be erased and to obtain an uncountable reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

***“And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much.”***

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will

cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much.”***

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.

***“And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much.”***

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, warns that when the general public cheats each other financially Allah, the Exalted, punishes them by appointing oppressive leaders over them. One aspect of this oppression is corruption which causes the general public great distress. The same Hadith warns that when the general public break their covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then they will be overpowered by their enemies who will illegally confiscate their wealth and property from them. Again, this is an aspect of corruption where people of influence, such as government officials, freely take the belongings of others without any fear of the consequences. When the general public becomes corrupt then their leaders and other people in influential social positions are inspired to act in the same way believing this behaviour is accepted by the general public. This leads to corruption on a national level. But if the general public obeyed Allah, the Exalted, and avoided mistreating others through corruption then their leaders and those in an influential social position would not dare act in a corrupt way full well knowing the general public would not stand for it. And according to the Hadith quoted earlier, if the general public remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, He would protect them from corrupt officials by appointing people into influential positions who are just in their affairs.

Instead of taking the immature path of blaming others for the widespread corruption observed in the world Muslims should truly reflect on their own behaviour and if necessary adjust their attitude. Otherwise, corruption in society will only increase with the passing of time. No one should believe that as they are not in an influential social position they have no effect on

the corruption which occurs in society. As proven by this discussion corruption occurs because of the negative behaviour of the general public and it therefore can only be removed by the good behaviour of the general public. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

*“...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...”*

***“And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much.”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4297, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a day would soon come when other nations would attack the muslim nation and even though they would be great in number they would be deemed insignificant by the world. Allah, the Exalted, would remove the fear of muslims from the hearts' of the other nations. This would occur because of the muslim nation's love for the material world and their hatred for death.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were small in number yet, they overcame entire nations whereas the muslims today are greater in number yet, have no social or political influence in the world. This is because the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, lived their lives according to the teachings of Islam thereby, favouring and preparing for the hereafter over enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. Whereas, most of the muslims today have adopted the opposite mind-set. It is important to understand that the root of all sins is the love of the material world. This is because any sin which is committed is done out of love and desire for it. The material world can be split into four aspects: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their relatives and friends. It is in the excess pursuit of these things which lead to sins, such as earning unlawful wealth out of love for fortune. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that love for wealth and authority is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction two hungry wolves would cause if they were let loose on a herd of sheep. Whenever people seek the excess of these aspects of the material world it always leads to disobedience of Allah, the

Exalted. When this occurs the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is removed which leads to nothing but trouble.

Even though, some muslims believe pursuing the excess things of the material world is harmless it is something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3158. He warned that he did not fear poverty for muslims. What he feared was that muslims would pursue the excess of this material world, such as excess wealth, and this would cause them to compete with each other over it and this would lead to their destruction. As warned in this Hadith this was the behaviour of the past nations.

As the material world is limited it is obvious that people would have to compete over it if they desired more than their necessities. This competition would cause them to adopt the characteristics which contradict the character of a true muslim, such as envy and enmity for others. They would stop caring for each other as they are too busy competing in gathering and hoarding the material world. And they would contradict the advice given in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6011, which advises that muslims should act like one body when any part of the body suffers from an illness the rest of the body shares in the pain. This competition would drive a muslim to stop loving for others what they love for themselves which is a characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, as they desire to outdo their fellow muslims in worldly things. Persisting on this competition will cause a muslim to love, hate, give and withhold all for the sake of the material world instead of for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This

competition is the difference between the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and many of the muslims today.

If muslims desire to regain the strength and influence Islam once had they must strive and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over striving for obtaining and hoarding the excess of this material world. This must occur from an individual level until it affects the whole nation.

***“And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much.”***

Even though the number of muslims have increased over time it is obvious that the strength of muslims has only decreased. Each muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith believes in the authenticity of the Holy Quran as doubting it would cause them to lose their faith. In the following verse Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to obtaining superiority and success which would remove the weakness and grief muslims are experiencing all around the world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

*“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”*

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that muslims only need to become true believers in order to achieve this superiority and success in both worlds. True belief involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and those towards people, such as loving for others what one loves for themselves which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This requires one to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Through this attitude was success and superiority granted to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And if muslims desire to achieve it then they must return to this rightly guided attitude. As muslims believe in the Holy Quran they should understand this simple teaching and act on it.

***“...but He pardons much.”***

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 31

وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ  
مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٣١﴾

*“And you will not cause failure [to Allah] upon the earth. And you have not besides Allah any protector or helper.”*

***“And you will not cause failure [to Allah] upon the earth. And you have not besides Allah any protector or helper.”***

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

***“And you will not cause failure [to Allah] upon the earth. And you have not besides Allah any protector or helper.”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after

work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“And you will not cause failure [to Allah] upon the earth. And you have not besides Allah any protector or helper.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And you will not cause failure [to Allah] upon the earth. And you have not besides Allah any protector or helper.”***

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their

worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“And you will not cause failure [to Allah] upon the earth. And you have not besides Allah any protector or helper.”***

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freed has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the

line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“And you will not cause failure [to Allah] upon the earth. And you have not besides Allah any protector or helper.”***

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“And you will not cause failure [to Allah] upon the earth. And you have not besides Allah any protector or helper.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will

cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“And you will not cause failure [to Allah] upon the earth. And you have not besides Allah any protector or helper.”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“And you will not cause failure [to Allah] upon the earth. And you have not besides Allah any protector or helper.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and

religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verses 32-35

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ الْجَوَارِ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ ﴿٣٢﴾

إِنْ يَشَأْ يُسْكِنِ الرِّيحَ فَيَظْلَلْنَ رَوَاكِدَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ ؕ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ  
لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

أَوْ يُوقِهِنَّ بِمَا كَسَبُوا وَيَعْفُ عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ﴿٣٤﴾

وَيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي ءَايَاتِنَا مَا لَهُمْ مِّن مَّخِصٍ ﴿٣٥﴾

*“And of His signs are the ships in the sea, like mountains.*

*If He willed, He could still the wind, and they would remain motionless on its surface. Indeed in that are signs for everyone patient and grateful.*

*Or He could destroy them for what they earned; but He pardons much.*

*And [that is so] those who dispute concerning Our signs may know that for them there is no place of escape.”*

***“And of His signs are the ships in the sea, like mountains. If He willed, He could still the wind, and they would remain motionless on its surface. Indeed in that are signs for everyone patient and grateful.”***

Water has been created with such balance that sea life can thrive within it while huge ships can sail on top of it. If water was more or less denser than this balance would not be possible. This perfect balance indicates a wise Creator namely, Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, in most countries the major part of trading occurs via ships.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that no one has eaten anything better than from the earnings of their own hands.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse laziness for trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Unfortunately, many Muslims turn away from working a lawful occupation, go on social benefits and inhabit the Mosques claiming to trust in Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them. This is not trusting in Allah, the Exalted, at all. It is only laziness which contradicts the teachings of Islam. True trust in Allah, the Exalted, in respect to gaining wealth is to use the means Allah, the Exalted, provided a person, such as their physical strength, in order to obtain lawful wealth according to the teachings of Islam and then trust that Allah, the Exalted, will provide lawful wealth to them

through these means. The aim of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is not to cause one to give up using the means He has created as this would make them useless and Allah, the Exalted, does not create useless things. The purpose of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is to prevent one from earning wealth through doubtful or unlawful means. As a Muslim should firmly believe their provision which includes wealth was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This allocation cannot change under any circumstances. A Muslim's duty is to strive in obtaining this through lawful means which is the tradition of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072. Using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, as He created them for this very purpose. A Muslim should therefore not be lazy while claiming trust in Allah, the Exalted, by going on social benefits when they have the means to earn lawful wealth through their own efforts and the means created and provided to them by Allah, the Exalted.

***“And of His signs are the ships in the sea, like mountains. If He willed, He could still the wind, and they would remain motionless on its surface. Indeed in that are signs for everyone patient...”***

Water has been created with such balance that sea life can thrive within it while huge ships can sail on top of it. If water was more or less denser than this balance would not be possible. This perfect balance indicates a wise Creator namely, Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, in most countries the major part of trading occurs via ships. Any difficulties one faces in their lives, such as difficulties in respect to their provision, must be faced with patience and the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

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 of His signs are the ships in the sea, like mountains. If He willed, He could still the wind, and they would remain motionless on its surface. Indeed in that are signs for everyone patient...”***

Water has been created with such balance that sea life can thrive within it while huge ships can sail on top of it. If water was more or less denser than this balance would not be possible. This perfect balance indicates a wise Creator namely, Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, in most countries the major part of trading occurs via ships. Any difficulties one faces in their lives, such as difficulties in respect to their provision, must be faced with patience and the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

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 register<sup>1</sup> 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 of His signs are the ships in the sea, like mountains. If He willed, He could still the wind, and they would remain motionless on its surface. Indeed in that are signs for everyone...grateful.”***

Water has been created with such balance that sea life can thrive within it while huge ships can sail on top of it. If water was more or less denser than this balance would not be possible. This perfect balance indicates a wise Creator namely, Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, in most countries the major part of trading occurs via ships.

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.

***“And of His signs are the ships in the sea, like mountains. If He willed, He could still the wind, and they would remain motionless on its surface. Indeed in that are signs for everyone patient and grateful.”***

Water has been created with such balance that sea life can thrive within it while huge ships can sail on top of it. If water was more or less denser than this balance would not be possible. This perfect balance indicates a wise Creator namely, Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, in most countries the major part of trading occurs via ships. During both times of ease and difficulties, such as facing ease and difficulties in respect to one's provision, one must remain sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every situation is blessed for a believer. The only condition is that they need to respond to each situation they encounter while obeying Allah, the Exalted, specifically, patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease.

There are two aspects of life. One aspect are the situations people find themselves in whether they are times of ease or difficulties. The control of what situation a person faces is out of their hands. Allah, the Exalted, has decided this and there is no escaping them. Therefore, stressing over the

situations one faces does not make sense as they are destined and therefore inevitable. The other aspect is a person's reaction to each situation. This is in each person's control and this is what they are judged on for example, showing patience or impatience in a difficult situation. Therefore, a muslim must concentrate on their behaviour and reaction in each situation instead of stressing over being in a situation as this is unavoidable. If a muslim desires to succeed in both worlds they should assess each situation and always act in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. For example, in times of ease they must use the blessings they possess as prescribed by Islam which is true gratitude to 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]...”*

And in times of difficulty they must show patience knowing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind the choices. 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 of His signs are the ships in the sea, like mountains. If He willed, He could still the wind, and they would remain motionless on its surface...Or He could destroy them for what they earned; but He pardons much. And [that is so] those who dispute concerning Our signs may know that for them there is no place of escape.”***

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 492, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a muslim does not face any type of physical difficulty, irrespective of its size, such as a prick of a thorn, or any emotional difficulty, such as stress, except Allah, the Exalted, erases their sins because of it.

This refers to minor sins as major sins require sincere repentance. This outcome occurs when a muslim remains patient from the onset of the difficulty until the end of their life. This is important to understand as many people believe they can complain initially and then show patience after. This is not true patience instead it is only acceptance which occurs with the passing of time. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1870. In addition, patience needs to be shown throughout one's life as a person can destroy their reward by showing impatience down the line.

A muslim should remember that it is far better to have their minor sins erased through these difficulties than to reach the Day of Judgment while still possessing them. A muslim should constantly repent and strive to perform righteous deeds in order to erase their minor sins. And if they encounter any physical or emotional difficulties they should remain patient

hoping for their minor sins to be erased and to obtain an uncountable reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

***“And of His signs are the ships in the sea, like mountains. If He willed, He could still the wind, and they would remain motionless on its surface...Or He could destroy them for what they earned; but He pardons much. And [that is so] those who dispute concerning Our signs may know that for them there is no place of escape.”***

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

***“And of His signs are the ships in the sea, like mountains. If He willed, He could still the wind, and they would remain motionless on its surface...Or He could destroy them for what they earned; but He pardons much. And [that is so] those who dispute concerning Our signs may know that for them there is no place of escape.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their

victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And of His signs are the ships in the sea, like mountains. If He willed, He could still the wind, and they would remain motionless on its surface...Or He could destroy them for what they earned; but He pardons much. And [that is so] those who dispute concerning Our signs may know that for them there is no place of escape.”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed

her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“And of His signs are the ships in the sea, like mountains. If He willed, He could still the wind, and they would remain motionless on its surface...Or He could destroy them for what they earned; but He pardons much. And [that is so] those who dispute concerning Our signs may know that for them there is no place of escape.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“...but He pardons much.”***

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“And [that is so] those who dispute concerning Our signs may know that for them there is no place of escape.”***

One must avoid this behaviour by sincerely obeying and following the two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted.

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

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verses 36-43

فَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمِنَّعُ الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ  
وَأَبْقَى لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَالَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ ٱلْإِثْمِ وَٱلْفَوَاحِشَ وَإِذَا مَا غَضِبُوا هُمْ  
يَغْفِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

وَالَّذِينَ ٱسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ  
وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ ٱلْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْصَبُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ۗ فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ  
إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

وَلَمَنْ ٱنصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ ﴿٤١﴾

إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ  
الْحَقِّ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٤٢﴾

وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿٤٣﴾

*“So whatever thing you have been given - it is but [for] enjoyment of the worldly life. But what is with Allah is better and more lasting for those who have believed and upon their Lord rely.*

*And those who avoid the major sins and immoralities, and when they are angry, they forgive.*

*And those who have responded to their Lord and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves, and from what We have provided them, they spend.*

*And those who, when tyranny strikes them, they retaliate [in a just manner].*

*And the retribution for an evil act is an evil one like it, but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation - his reward is [due] from Allah. Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers.*

*And whoever retaliates after having been wronged - those have not upon them any cause [for blame].*

*The cause is only against the ones who wrong the people and tyrannize upon the earth without right. Those will have a painful punishment.*

*And whoever is patient and forgives - indeed, that is of the matters [worthy] of resolve.”*

***“So whatever thing you have been given...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Creator and Allocator of provision to the entire creation which they need to preserve their physical and spiritual constitutions. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the provision of the entire creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

The one who understands this divine name will rely on Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them as He has planned for them before they were created. They will prove this reliance by striving to gain lawful provision as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, while refraining from anything which is unlawful and doubtful.

It is important to note that as people require physical provision in the form of food and drink. Similarly, the soul of a muslim requires provision also. This provision strengthens it and leads it to eternal bliss. This provision is in the form of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The foundation of all this is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Therefore, muslims should strive to gain this important provision of the soul as well as provision for their physical body. Two elements should be remembered in this respect. Do not exert unlawful and unnecessary efforts in gaining one's guaranteed provision. And do not misuse or waste the provision one gains.

A muslim, should act on this divine name by fulfilling their duty by providing for their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. This includes providing them with both physical and spiritual provision through education. A muslim should also do the same for the needy according to their capacity without fearing poverty for themselves. They should remember the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893, which advises that Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the needs of the muslim who takes care of the needs of others.

***“So whatever thing you have been given - it is but [for] enjoyment of the worldly life. But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting...”***

One will appreciate this reality when they adopt the correct understanding and perception through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

It is important for muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to

them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“So whatever thing you have been given - it is but [for] enjoyment of the worldly life. But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting...”***

One will appreciate this reality when they adopt the correct understanding and perception through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

***“So whatever thing you have been given - it is but [for] enjoyment of the worldly life. But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting...”***

One will appreciate this reality when they adopt the correct understanding and perception through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2377, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that he was not concerned over the excess of this material world and his example in this world is of a rider who takes a short rest under the shade of a tree and then leaves it behind by moving on.

In reality, each person is a traveller who stays in this world for a very limited time compared to where they came from meaning, the world of the souls and to where they are heading which is the eternal hereafter. In fact, this world in comparison is like waiting at a bus stop. In this Hadith this world has been compared to a shadow. This is because a shadow does not last long and fades away quickly without people even taking notice which is exactly how a person's days and nights pass away. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not mention a traveller's inn or a hotel as these are solid structures which indicate permanence. A fading shadow better describes this material world. This is because no matter how old a person is they always admit that their life flashed by and felt like a moment. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgment Day), as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated a rider not someone walking as the one who is walking would rest more under the shade of the tree than a rider. This further indicates the limited time people spend in this world.

Taking a rest in the shade indicates the importance of one correctly using the material world in order to obtain the provisions they need just like the rider takes the provision they need namely, rest. A muslim should therefore prepare for their immediate departure from this world by preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

This does not mean one should abandon this world as this Hadith clearly indicates one should make use of the material world in order to prepare for the hereafter. The rider takes a rest and muslims must gather the things which will benefit them in the hereafter instead of dedicating their time to unnecessary things which will leave them empty handed on Judgment Day. Chapter 89 Al Fajar, verses 23-24:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance? He will say, “Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.”*”

***“So whatever thing you have been given - it is but [for] enjoyment of the worldly life. But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting...”***

One will appreciate this reality when they adopt the correct understanding and perception through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

Some muslims often claim that one's faith and the material world need to walk hand in hand with each other without a person being extreme in either. It is strange how most of those who claim this and use this statement as a way to enjoy the lawful luxuries and pleasures of this world do not truly understand nor adhere to it. This statement is true but applies to those worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. For example, occasionally exercising in order to keep the body healthy which is a trust given to a person. It does not mean one can enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world in excess while neglecting following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge even if they fulfil the standard obligatory duties. As gaining knowledge in itself is a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

In addition, walking hand in hand would suggest that one dedicates equal attention, effort and time to each thing. How many muslims can honestly say that they dedicate equal effort, energy and time to the material world and preparing for the hereafter? If they do not, and most do not, then how exactly are they fulfilling this statement?

A muslim should not fool themselves as their time on Earth is limited and they will not be given a second chance once they depart from it. Therefore, they should honestly strive to fulfil this statement by at least dedicating equal time, effort and energy to both the material world and preparing for the hereafter. It is important to note, that some would argue that treating a temporary abode and an everlasting abode equal is not wise.

***“So whatever thing you have been given - it is but [for] enjoyment of the worldly life. But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting...”***

One will appreciate this reality when they adopt the correct understanding and perception through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing. Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim they stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that they stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, muslims do not treat it like one. Instead,

they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.

***“So whatever thing you have been given - it is but [for] enjoyment of the worldly life. But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting...”***

One will appreciate this reality when they adopt the correct understanding and perception through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

It is important for muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient.” And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves.”*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. 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.”*

***“So whatever thing you have been given - it is but [for] enjoyment of the worldly life. But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting...”***

One will appreciate this reality when they adopt the correct understanding and perception through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that everything in this material world is cursed except the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, what is connected to it, the knowledgeable person and the student of knowledge.

The remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, encompasses all the levels of remembrance. Namely, internal silent remembrance, which includes correcting one's intention so that they only act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Remembering Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue and the most important is practically remembering Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Anything which leads to the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, includes the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, such as striving in the material world in order to fulfill one's necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or

extravagance. In reality, this includes any action which appears worldly or religious as long as it involves the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

Both the knowledgeable person and the student of knowledge are the only people in reality who will obey Allah, the Exalted, correctly as this is not possible to achieve without knowledge. An ignorant person disobeys Allah, the Exalted, without even realizing it as they are unaware of what counts as a sin or a righteous deed. In some cases, one may even believe they are strictly obeying Him even though they are far from it.

To conclude, in reality nothing is really cursed in the material world in itself. It is how a thing is used which determines if it is cursed or not. For example, if wealth is used correctly according to the teachings of Islam then it is a great blessing in both worlds. But if it is misused or hoarded then it will become a curse for its owner in both worlds. This can be applied to all things in this world.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who have believed...And those who have responded to their Lord...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who have believed...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who have...upon their Lord rely.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2344, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if people truly trusted Allah, the Exalted, He would provide for them just like He provides for birds. They leave their nests hungry in the morning and return in the evening satisfied.

Truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is something which is felt in the heart but is proven through the limbs meaning, when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

*“...And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him...”*

The aspect of trust which is internal involves firmly believing that only Allah, the Exalted, can provide one with beneficial things and protect them from harmful things both in worldly and religious matters. A muslim understands that no one except Allah, the Exalted, can give, withhold, harm or benefit someone.

It is important to note, that truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, does not mean one should abandon using the means which Allah, the Exalted, has provided, such as medicine. As the main Hadith under discussion clearly mentions that the birds leave their nests actively searching for provision. When one uses the strength and means provided by Allah, the Exalted, according to the teachings of Islam they are undoubtedly obeying Him. This is in fact, the outward element of trusting in Allah, the Exalted. This has been made clear in many verses and Hadiths. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 71:

*“O you who have believed, take your precaution...”*

In reality, the outward activity is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and trusting Allah, the Exalted, inwardly is the inward state of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One should not abandon the outward tradition even if they possess the inward state of trust.

Actions and using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting Him. In this respect, actions can be split into three categories. The first are those actions of obedience which Allah, the Exalted, commands muslims to do so that they can avoid Hell and obtain Paradise. Abandoning these while claiming trust that Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them is simply wishful thinking and is therefore blameworthy.

The second type of actions are those means which Allah, the Exalted, has created in this world in order for people to live in it safely, such as eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty and wearing warm clothes in cold weather. A person who abandons these and causes harm to himself is blameworthy. However, there are some people who have been provided special strength by Allah, the Exalted, so that they can avoid these means without harming themselves. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used to fast for days on end uninterrupted but forbade others from doing the same as Allah, the Exalted, provided for him directly without the need for food. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1922. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed for the fourth rightly guided Caliph Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, so that he would not feel excess cold or heat. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 117. Therefore, if a person turns away from these means but is provided with the strength to endure without failing in their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people then it is acceptable otherwise it is blameworthy.

The third type of actions in respect to trusting in Allah, the Exalted, are those things which have been set as a customary practice which Allah, the Exalted, sometimes breaks for certain people. An example of this are the people who become cured of illnesses without the need of medicine. This is quite common especially in poorer countries where medicine is difficult to obtain. This is linked to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2144, which advises that no person will die until they utilize every ounce of their provision which was allocated to them, which according to another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, was over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. So the one who truly realises this Hadith might not seek provision actively knowing that what was allocated to them so long ago cannot miss them. So for this person the customary means of obtaining provision such as obtaining it

through a job is broken by Allah, the Exalted. This is a high and rare rank. Only the one who can behave in such a manner without complaining or panicking nor expecting things from people is free of blame if they choose this path. It is important to note, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692, that it is a sin for a person to fail in providing for their dependents even though they may be on this high rank.

Having real trust in Allah, the Exalted, leads to being content with destiny. Meaning, whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them they accept without complaint and without desiring things to change as they firmly trust that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the 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.”*

To conclude, it is best to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by using the lawful means one has been granted firmly believing they are from Allah, the Exalted, and trust internally that only what Allah, the Exalted, decides will occur, which is undoubtedly the best choice for each person whether they observe this or not.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who have...upon their Lord rely.”***

Muslims often question how they can build up and strengthen their trust in Allah, the Exalted, especially during difficulties. One of the main ways of doing this is through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is because the one who is disobedient to Allah, the Exalted, will always believe Allah, the Exalted, will not help them which in turn weakens their trust in Him. Whereas, the obedient muslim will firmly believe that as they have fulfilled their duties Allah, the Exalted, will definitely respond to them in their moment of need which in turn strengthens their trust in Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, advises that Allah, the Exalted, responds to a person according to their perception of Him. The disobedient person will always have negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, because of their disobedience. Whereas, an obedient muslim will always have positive thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, because of their obedience. This thinking can weaken or strengthen a muslim's trust in Allah, the Exalted. The obedient muslim trusts that if they fulfilled their side of a business contract their business partner would do the same. Similarly, an obedient muslim trusts that as they through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, have fulfilled their duties Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil His promises by aiding them throughout their life especially, through difficulties. Whereas, the one who does not fulfil their side of a business contract would not trust or hope that their business partner will fulfil their side. Similarly, a disobedient person would not trust that Allah, the Exalted, would aid them as they failed to fulfil their duties.

To conclude, having and building trust in Allah, the Exalted, is directly linked to His obedience. The more one is obedient the more they will trust in Him. The less they are obedient they less they will trust in Him.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who have...upon their Lord rely.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey 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 whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those who avoid the major sins and immoralities...”***

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.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those who avoid the major sins and immoralities...”***

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.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those who...when they are angry, they forgive.”***

The first step of forgiving others when one is angry is controlling their anger so that they do not wrong others.

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.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those who...when they are angry, they forgive.”***

All muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. There will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those who avoid the major sins and immoralities, and when they are angry, they forgive.”***

These verses indicate that when a muslim commits major or minor sins they desire the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, therefore they should learn to forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. These verses therefore indicate an important principle in Islam namely, what you give is what you shall receive.

Throughout the divine scriptures there are many examples which indicate that a person shall be treated according to how they act. For example, in one verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, declares that He will remember the person who remembers Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152.

*“So remember Me; I will remember you.”*

Another example is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 40:

*“...fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me]...”*

Finally, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever shows mercy to others will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is quite obvious that people strive in this material world as they desire peace of mind and contentment. In light of the earlier discussion, peace in one's life is often achieved when a person allows others to live in peace. If one reflects on their own life they will realise that people can be split into two categories: those who mind their business and allow others to live in peace and those who do not. It does not take a genius to figure out that those who let others live in peace are the ones who gain peace. Whereas, members of the other group never find peace irrespective of how many worldly blessings they may possess. This 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 3976, that a muslim cannot perfect their Islam until they avoid things which do not concern them. Those who ignore this advice and busy themselves with interfering with other people are the ones who never find peace. As they deprive others of peace in turn Allah, the Exalted, deprives them of it.

Therefore, a large step towards achieving peace of mind is to let others live in peace. It is important to note, this does not mean one should abandon commanding good and forbidding evil as this is an important duty. But it means that those things which are not sinful should be left alone as constantly chiding others on issues which are not unlawful only leads to enmity and the loss of peace in peoples' lives. There was a day and age

when people loved being advised by others on all lawful and unlawful matters even if this meant they were being chided as they desired to reform themselves for the better. But that day has long passed. Nowadays, most people dislike being chided over the unlawful let alone those things which are lawful yet undesirable. So it is best to avoid this attitude if one desires to gain a bit of peace in their life.

To conclude, the one who lets others live in peace shall be granted peace by Allah, the Exalted.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those who have responded to their Lord...”***

These verses indicate the practical element of one's faith meaning, supporting one's inner belief with outward obedience.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and

incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those who have responded to their Lord...”***

This is achieved by sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

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

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those who have responded to their Lord...”***

This is achieved by sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

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.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those who have responded to their Lord...”***

This is achieved by sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

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.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those who...established prayer...”***

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.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those who...established prayer...”***

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.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those...whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves...”***

Muslims should only consult a few people in respect to their affairs. They should select these few people according to the advice of the Holy Quran. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 43:

*“...So ask the people of the message if you do not know.”*

This verse reminds muslims to consult those who possess knowledge. As consulting an ignorant person only leads to further trouble. Just like a person would be foolish to consult a car mechanic over their physical health a muslim should only consult those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

In addition, a muslim should only consult those who fear Allah, the Exalted. This is because they will never advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, those who do not fear or obey Allah, the Exalted, might possess knowledge and experience but they will easily advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, which only increases one's problems. In reality, those who fear Allah, the Exalted, possess true knowledge and only this knowledge will guide others through their problems successfully. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those...whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves...”***

It is important to note that one should react correctly whenever their advice is not acted upon. When the person seeking advice chooses an unlawful decision which contradicts the advice given to them the advisor should show dislike towards their choice as this is a branch of faith. In fact, disliking something for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then they must stay within the limits of Islam when showing their dislike.

If the choices are between two lawful options and their advice is not acted upon then they should not become annoyed at the one seeking advice as they chose a lawful choice. They should instead respect their decision and not harbour any ill feelings for them nor outwardly show any signs of annoyance, such as telling them they told them so if their decision does not work out for them. People are not Angels they will make mistakes so it is best to be kind to others even if they reject advice. One should instead hope for reward by fulfilling their duty from Allah, the Exalted, by giving good and sincere advice to another.

In addition, the one seeking advice should not ask for advice if they have already made their mind up before hand as this only opens the door for a potential argument if they seek someone's advice only to reject it as it contradicts their pre-determined choice.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those...whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves...”***

Unfortunately, some people experience tests and times of ease yet, do not change their character in a positive way. Even though, there are many possible causes only one will be discussed in this chapter.

In some cases, people do not change for the better because the people around them do not encourage them to do so. In fact, many people have this habit of only patting others on the back and telling them what they want to hear. They somehow believe this is the character of a good companion and friend. They falsely believe acting in this way is a sign of their deep love and respect for others. But this is completely incorrect as this behaviour only encourages one to continue with their attitude without improving it. There is nothing wrong with providing emotional comfort to others but a good friend will always kindly point out the ways in which their friend or relative can improve their character. This will in fact improve the quality and condition of their companion's life in this world and in the next. While merely patting others on the back will only provide temporary comfort to them but in no way will it improve the situation or their character. The correct attitude is possible to achieve without disrespecting others. This is the duty of a person towards others especially, their relatives. In reality, if a person's friend or relative dislikes their good advice then they do not value their relationship with them. A person should never let anything, such as a person's age, prevent them from speaking the truth and kindly advising them to change their attitude for the better. Even if it is one's own parents they should still fulfil this duty as this behaviour is the essence of treating them kindly. Simply staying quiet just because they are one's parents

should not be the attitude of a person unless they know advising them will only lead to further problems for everyone.

A shoulder to cry on is only really useful when it leads to a person changing for the better. Even if a person's attitude in a particular situation is correct none the less there are always lessons they can learn from the situation, which should be pointed out to them by others.

To conclude, one must advise others to do good and turn away from evil and not only provide emotional support by simply patting others on the back. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*"...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression..."*

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those...whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves...”***

It is important for muslims to offer advice correctly and sincerely as this is an aspect of Islam according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. In lawful matters an aspect of this is that a muslim should give advice based on the character of the one seeking the advice instead of basing it on their own character. This is in fact a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who gave different advice when questioned about the same thing from different people. This is important as people are different and what one person finds bearable another might not so it is best to give advice based on the questioner's character. This attitude will reduce the chances of one giving a biased opinion which is tailored to their own character and way of life.

In addition, in lawful matters in most cases it is best not to directly advise people what to do instead they should be advised and aided in putting together a list of pros and cons to each possible choice and then make an informed decision based on this list. This will most likely lead to a better and satisfactory outcome and it prevents a person blaming their advisor in the future as they did not advise them directly by telling them to choose a specific option.

Finally, a person should never be ashamed of admitting they are unsure about a matter and should advise others to seek advice from someone more qualified if necessary.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...those...whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves...”***

Since the passing of the righteous predecessors the strength of the muslim nation has weakened dramatically. It is logical that the greater the number of people in a group the stronger the group will become yet muslims have somehow defied this logic. The strength of the muslim nation has only decreased as the number of muslims have increased. One of the main reasons this has occurred is connected to chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2 of the Holy Quran:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many muslims now observe who is doing an action instead of observing what they are doing. If the person is linked to them for example, a relative, they support them even if the thing is not good. Similarly, if the person has no relationship with them they turn away from supporting them even if the thing is good. This attitude completely contradicts the traditions of the righteous predecessors. They would support others in good irrespective of who was doing it. In fact, they went so far on acting on this verse of the Holy Quran that they would even support those they did not get on with as long as it was a good thing.

The other thing connected to this is that many muslims fail to support each other in good as they believe the person they are supporting will gain more prominence than them. This condition has even affected scholars and Islamic educational institutes. They make lame excuses not to aid others in good as they do not have a relationship with them and they fear their own institution will be forgotten and those they help will gain further respect in society. But this is completely wrong as one only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the truth. As long as one's intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, supporting others in good will increase their respect within society. Allah, the Exalted, will cause the hearts of the people to turn to them even if their support is for another organisation, institution or person. For example, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed this world Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily challenged for the Caliphate and would have found plenty of support in his favour. But he knew the right thing to do was to nominate Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not worry about being forgotten by society if he supported another person. He instead obeyed the command in the verse mentioned earlier and supported what was right. This is confirmed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. The honour and respect of Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, within society only increased by this action. This is obvious to those who are aware of Islamic history.

Muslims must reflect on this deeply, change their mentality and strive to aid others in good irrespective of who is doing it and not hold back fearing their support will cause them to be forgotten within society. Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will never be forgotten in both this world and the next. In fact, their respect and honour will only grow in both worlds.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who...from what We have provided them, they spend.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is infinitely bountiful and bestows favours and blessings without recompense or external cause. He gives generously without being asked.

The muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to 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]...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by bestowing the blessings they have been given to others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. The one who gives to others will be given more than they could have ever imagined. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.”*

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who...from what We have provided them, they spend.”***

Severe warnings over failing to donate the obligatory charity have been given in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that the person who does not donate their obligatory charity will encounter a large poisonous snake which will continuously bite them on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 180:

*“And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection...”*

According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, when the members of a society withhold the obligatory charity Allah, the Exalted, will withhold rain and if it was not for the animals He would not let it rain at all. This major sin is therefore one potential cause of the long periods of drought some nations face.

Not offering the obligatory charity is a sign of extreme greed as it is only an extremely tiny portion of one's wealth namely, 2.5%. It is clear that the

miser is far from Allah, the Exalted, the people and close to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

Muslims must understand that donating the obligatory charity does not only protect them from punishment but it leads to blessings in one's life which far outweigh the wealth they donated. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6592, that charity does not decrease one's wealth. This means that when one donates Allah, the Exalted, compensates them. For example, He provides them with business opportunities which cause them to gain more wealth than they donated. This repayment is confirmed in many places of the Holy Quran for example, chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 11:

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He will multiply it for him and he will have a noble reward?”*

In addition, this Hadith could indicate that as each person's provision is pre-recorded whatever wealth which is destined to be spent on them will never change irrespective of how much wealth a person donates. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748.

A muslim must therefore avoid the wrath of Allah, the Exalted, by donating a very small fraction of their wealth in the form of the obligatory charity

while hoping for a reward which is much greater both in this world and the next.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who...from what We have provided them, they spend.”***

This involves using every blessing one has 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.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who...from what We have provided them, they spend.”***

This involves using every blessing one has 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.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who...from what We have provided them, they spend.”***

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.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who...from what We have provided them, they spend.”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that the one who spends in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, will be rewarded according to what they give. And he warned not to hoard otherwise Allah, the Exalted, will withhold His blessings.

It is important to note, that one must only obtain and spend lawful wealth as any righteous deed which has a foundation in the unlawful will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of one's intention. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

In addition, this spending is not only through charity but includes spending on one's own necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. This is in fact a righteous deed according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. A muslim should spend in a balanced way whereby they help others without becoming needy themselves. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 29:

*“And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck or extend it completely and [thereby] become blamed and insolvent.”*

A muslim should donate regularly according to their means even if it is a little as Allah, the Exalted, observes one's quality meaning, their sincerity, not the quantity of a deed. Regularly donating a little is far better and more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, than donating a larger amount once in a while. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465.

It is important to note, as mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion when one gives according to their means Allah, the Exalted, will reward them according to His infinite status. But the one who holds back will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. If a muslim hoards their wealth they will leave it behind for others to enjoy while they are held accountable for it. If they misuse their wealth it will become a curse and burden for them in this world and a punishment in the next.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who...when tyranny strikes them, they retaliate.”***

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 himself 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.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who...when tyranny strikes them, they retaliate.”***

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave glad tidings to the one who possesses humility without a shortcoming meaning, weakness. The humble one submits, accepts and acts on the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, thereby proving their servanthood to Him. They readily accept the truth when it is presented to them even if it contradicts their desires and irrespective of who delivers it to them. Meaning, they do not reject the truth believing they know best. They do not look down at others believing they are superior to them because of any worldly thing they possess or because of their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, as they understand that their final outcome or the final outcome of others is unknown to them. Meaning, they may die while Allah, the Exalted, is not pleased with them. This reality should prevent a person from the deadly sin of pride. An atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Humility without weakness means that a muslim always demonstrates kindness to others but is not afraid to defend themselves if necessary nor does their humility cause them to appear disgraced and dishonored.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who...when tyranny strikes them, they retaliate. And the retribution for an evil act is an evil one like it, but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation - his reward is [due] from Allāh...And whoever retaliates after having been wronged - those have not upon them any cause [for blame]...And whoever is patient and forgives - indeed, that is of the matters [worthy] of resolve.”***

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

***“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”***

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid a muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but

also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”*

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on muslims as taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Finally, those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted, does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their small sins. A muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness and peace of mind in both worlds.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who...when tyranny strikes them, they retaliate. And the retribution for an evil act is an evil one like it, but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation - his reward is [due] from Allāh...And whoever retaliates after having been wronged - those have not upon them any cause [for blame]...And whoever is patient and forgives - indeed, that is of the matters [worthy] of resolve.”***

It is easy to reply evil with evil. But what makes a muslim special is when they reply evil with good. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is important to understand that behaving in this manner will never reduce a person's rank in anyway. Otherwise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not have acted in this way. In fact, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, advises that when one replies evil with good, such as forgiving others, Allah, the Exalted, raises them in honour. So this attitude does not only benefit others but more importantly it benefits the muslim themselves. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

***“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”***

In addition, as advised by this verse if someone adopts this attitude they will find that those who do not treat them well will eventually become ashamed of their actions and change their attitude. Even the most toughest hearts eventually become affected when treated in this manner. For

example, when a husband mistreats his wife then it is best for her to rise above a negative reply and instead reply in a nice manner. This will cause the husband to respect and love his wife more. When a colleague at work shows bad manners it is best to show them the quality of a true muslim by replying with good manners. When one behaves like this the people around them will respect and love them more which will cause their life to become easier. But when a person replies evil with evil they will always face more evil from others which will only make their life harder in both worlds. This is quite obvious if one reflects over this for a moment. It is important to note, when others exceed the limits then one should defend themselves and detach from the person. But in most cases bad character should be replied with good character.

***“...Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers...The cause is only against the ones who wrong the people...Those will have a painful punishment.”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the bankrupt muslim is the one who accumulates many righteous deeds, such as fasting and prayer, but as they mistreated people their good deeds will be given to their victims and if necessary their victim's sins will be given to them on Judgement Day. This will lead to them being hurled into Hell.

It is important to understand that a muslim must fulfil two aspects of faith in order to achieve success. The first are the duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer. The second aspect is in respect to people which includes treating them kindly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true believer until they keep they physical and verbal harm away from the life and possessions of others.

It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, is infinitely forgiving meaning, He will forgive those who sincerely repent to Him. But He will not forgive the sins which involve other people until the victim forgives first. As people are not so forgiving a muslim should be fearful that those who they have wronged will exact revenge on them by taking away their precious good deeds on Judgment Day. Even if a muslim fulfils the rights of Allah, the Exalted, they may still end up in Hell simply because they have wronged others. It is therefore important for muslims to strive

to fulfil both aspects of their duties in order to obtain success in both worlds.

***“...Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers...The cause is only against the ones who wrong the people and tyrannize upon the earth without right. Those will have a painful punishment.”***

Corruption is when a person abuses the blessings they possess, especially their social influence, in order to gain worldly things, such as power and wealth. It affects a muslim's duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and leads to much sins against people, such as oppression.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, warns that when the general public cheats each other financially Allah, the Exalted, punishes them by appointing oppressive leaders over them. One aspect of this oppression is corruption which causes the general public great distress. The same Hadith warns that when the general public break their covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then they will be overpowered by their enemies who will illegally confiscate their wealth and property from them. Again, this is an aspect of corruption where people of influence, such as government officials, freely take the belongings of others without any fear of the consequences. When the general public becomes corrupt then their leaders and other people in influential social positions are inspired to act in the same way believing this behaviour is accepted by the general public. This leads to corruption on a national level. But if the general public obeyed Allah, the Exalted, and avoided mistreating others through corruption then their leaders and those in an influential social position would not dare act in a corrupt way full well knowing the general public would not stand for it. And according to the Hadith quoted earlier, if the general public remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, He would protect them from corrupt officials by appointing people into influential positions who are just in their affairs.

Instead of taking the immature path of blaming others for the widespread corruption observed in the world muslims should truly reflect on their own behaviour and if necessary adjust their attitude. Otherwise, corruption in society will only increase with the passing of time. No one should believe that as they are not in an influential social position they have no effect on the corruption which occurs in society. As proven by this discussion corruption occurs because of the negative behaviour of the general public and it therefore can only be removed by the good behaviour of the general public. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

*“...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...”*

***“...Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers...The cause is only against the ones who wrong the people and tyrannize upon the earth without right. Those will have a painful punishment.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will

still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true muslim.

If a muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the

destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

***“...Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers...The cause is only against the ones who wrong the people and tyrannize upon the earth without right. Those will have a painful punishment.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“...Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers...The cause is only against the ones who wrong the people and tyrannize upon the earth without right. Those will have a painful punishment.”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to

mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“...Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers...The cause is only against the ones who wrong the people and tyrannize upon the earth without right. Those will have a painful punishment.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both

worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...whoever is patient...”***

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...”*

***“...But what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for...whoever is patient...”***

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 register<sup>1</sup> 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 they 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.

***“...But what is with Allah is better and more lasting for those who have believed and upon their Lord rely. And those who avoid the major sins and immoralities, and when they are angry, they forgive. And those who have responded to their Lord and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves, and from what We have provided them, they spend. And those who, when tyranny strikes them, they retaliate [in a just manner]. And the retribution for an evil act is an evil one like it, but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation - his reward is [due] from Allah. Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers. And whoever retaliates after having been wronged - those have not upon them any cause [for blame]...And whoever is patient and forgives - indeed, that is of the matters [worthy] of 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 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verses 44-46

وَمَنْ يُضَلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ مِّنْ بَعْدِهِ ۗ وَتَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ  
لَمَّا رَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ يَقُولُونَ هَلْ إِلَىٰ مَرَدٍّ مِّنْ سَبِيلِ



وَتَرَنَّهُمْ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا خَشِيعَاتٍ مِّنَ الذُّلِّ يَنْظُرُونَ  
مِنَ طَرْفٍ خَفِيٍّ ۗ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ الْخَسِرِينَ الَّذِينَ  
خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ  
فِي عَذَابٍ مُّقِيمٍ



وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَنْ  
يُضَلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ



“And he whom Allah sends astray - for him there is no protector beyond Him. And you will see the wrongdoers, when they see the punishment, saying, “Is there for return [to the former world] anyway?”

*And you will see them being exposed to it [i.e., the Fire], humbled from humiliation, looking from [behind] a covert glance. And those who had believed will say, "Indeed, the [true] losers are the ones who lost themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection. Unquestionably, the wrongdoers are in an enduring punishment."*

*And there will not be for them any allies to aid them other than Allah. And whoever Allah sends astray - for him there is no way."*

***“And he whom Allah sends astray - for him there is no protector beyond Him...for him there is no way [to success].”***

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a

Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“...And you will see the wrongdoers, when they see the punishment...And you will see them being exposed to it [Hell], humbled from humiliation, looking from [behind] a covert glance...And there will not be for them any allies to aid them other than Allāh...”***

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.

***“And you will see the wrongdoers, when they see the punishment, saying, “Is there for return [to the former world] any way?”...And those who had believed will say, “Indeed, the [true] losers are the ones who lost themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection...”***

It is important for muslims to understand that whenever they face any type of worldly failure or regrets they should remind themselves of the regrets in the hereafter some people will have, such as the one mentioned in chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

*“He will say, “Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.””*

In this world one's regret will always be followed by another chance or other options which they can pursue in order to gain success once again. But the regret and failure of the hereafter is something which cannot be rectified meaning, there are no second chances in the next world. No one will have the opportunity to return to Earth in order to act differently.

Therefore, every muslim should be more concerned with the failures they may encounter in the hereafter over the failures and regrets of this world. This does not mean one should not strive to achieve lawful success in this world. It means they should always prioritise gaining success in the hereafter over gaining success in this world. This is an important mentality

muslims should adopt before they reach a day where reflecting on their failures and regrets will not help them in the slightest. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“And you will see the wrongdoers, when they see the punishment, saying, "Is there for return [to the former world] any way?"...And those who had believed will say, "Indeed, the [true] losers are the ones who lost themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection..."”***

It is important for muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, "Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given*

*knowledge said, "Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient." And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves."*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. 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 you will see the wrongdoers, when they see the punishment, saying, "Is there for return [to the former world] any way?"...And those who had believed will say, "Indeed, the [true] losers are the ones who lost themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection..."”***

Greatness and true success is not connected to worldly things, such as wealth or fame. A person may obtain some worldly success through these things but it is quite obvious if one turns the pages of history that this type of success is very temporary and it eventually becomes a burden and regret for a person. A muslim should never believe that superiority lies in these things thereby dedicating themselves to obtaining them while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Nor should they look down at others who do not possess these worldly things believing they have no value or significance as this attitude contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6071, that the people of Paradise are those who are considered insignificant by society and concluded that if they took an oath on something Allah, the Exalted, would fulfil it for them.

True honour, success and greatness in this world and the next only lies in piety. So the more one sincerely strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the greater they are even if they appear insignificant to society. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore search for true success in this and not waste their time and efforts in searching for it in worldly things otherwise they may well reach the hereafter a great loser. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

*“Say, “Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.””*

***“And you will see the wrongdoers, when they see the punishment, saying, “Is there for return [to the former world] any way?”...And those who had believed will say, “Indeed, the [true] losers are the ones who lost themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection...”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed

her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“And you will see the wrongdoers, when they see the punishment, saying, "Is there for return [to the former world] any way?"...And those who had believed will say, "Indeed, the [true] losers are the ones who lost themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection..."”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their

victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And you will see the wrongdoers, when they see the punishment, saying, “Is there for return [to the former world] any way?”...And those who had believed will say, “Indeed, the [true] losers are the ones who lost themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection...”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“And you will see the wrongdoers, when they see the punishment, saying, "Is there for return [to the former world] any way?"...And those who had believed will say, "Indeed, the [true] losers are the ones who lost themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection..."”***

Adopting true belief will prevent this outcome. True belief involves sincerity.

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 Allah, the Exalted, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran and to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and

regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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 you will see the wrongdoers, when they see the punishment, saying, “Is there for return [to the former world] any way?”...And those who had believed will say, “Indeed, the [true] losers are the ones who lost themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection...”***

Adopting true belief will prevent this outcome.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the

body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“And you will see the wrongdoers, when they see the punishment, saying, “Is there for return [to the former world] any way?”...And those who had believed will say, “Indeed, the [true] losers are the ones who lost themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection. Unquestionably, the wrongdoers are in an enduring punishment. And there will not be for them any allies to aid them other than Allāh...”***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verses 47-48

أَسْتَجِيبُوا لِرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ مَلْجَأٍ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ نَكِيرٍ

٤٧

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا إِنْ عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ وَإِنَّا إِذَا أَذَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً فَرِحَ بِهَا وَإِنْ تُصِبَّهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَإِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ كَفُورٌ

٤٨

*“Respond to your Lord before a Day comes from Allah of which there is no repelling. No refuge will you have that Day, nor for you will there be any denial.*

*But if they turn away - then We have not sent you over them as a guardian; upon you is only [the duty of] notification. And indeed, when We let man taste mercy from Us, he [overly] rejoices in it; but if evil afflicts him for what his hands have put forth, then indeed, man is ungrateful.”*

***“Respond to your Lord before a Day comes from Allah of which there is no repelling. No refuge will you have that Day...”***

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.

***“Respond to your Lord before a Day comes from Allah of which there is no repelling. No refuge will you have that Day...”***

The Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation on the Day of Judgment. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864.

This will cause people to sweat according to the deeds they performed during their lives on Earth. Some people's sweat will reach up to their ankles, some their knees and for others it will reach their mouths.

One only needs to ponder over the times they were subjected to intense summer weather and how the heat affected their attitude and behaviour. Through this one can imagine how difficult the situation on Judgment Day will be when the Sun is brought so close to them. This shows that those who strive hard and exert sincere efforts in the obedience 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, will find relaxation on Judgment Day. But those who were lazy and relaxed during their lives on Earth will be subjected to great stress on Judgment Day. Simply put, the one who strives here will relax there but the one who relaxes here will strive there in difficulty.

The same way people strive hard in this material world so that they obtain a comfortable life and even a comfortable retirement, even though reaching this retirement age is not guaranteed, muslims should strive

even harder in this world by obeying Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life so that they can obtain peace and comfort on a day that is guaranteed to occur. It is a sign of great ignorance to strive for a day one may never reach namely, the day of retirement, and not strive for a day they are guaranteed to reach and experience namely, Judgment Day.

***“Respond to your Lord before a Day comes from Allah of which there is no repelling. No refuge will you have that Day...”***

People will be commanded to cross the Bridge which will be placed over Hell on the Day of Judgment. This has been discussed extensively in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6573. It warns that extremely large hooks will be on the Bridge which will affect people according to their deeds. Some will be flung into Hell by them, some will be subjected to great torture before they cross the Bridge, others will only face minimal injury from them and finally the righteous will not be harmed by them. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 455, warns that the Bridge is narrower than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword.

The important thing to learn from this is that each person will cross the Bridge according to their deeds. So it is important for Muslims not to neglect any duties if they desire to cross the Bridge safely. They must fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. These include duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. One should not neglect this and simply hope they will magically cross the Bridge unaffected.

In addition, the ease at which a person will cross this Bridge will be a mirror of how much they remained steadfast on the straight path of Islam in this world. This straight path is the path 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...”*

Anyone who abandons this path will not successfully cross this Bridge. Simply put, the more one remains steadfast on the straight path in this world the easier they will cross the Bridge over Hell on Judgment Day. The straight path has been made clear in this world so muslims are left with no excuses from following it thereby ensuring they safely cross the Bridge on Judgment Day.

***“Respond to your Lord before a Day comes from Allah of which there is no repelling. No refuge will you have that Day...”***

Responding to Allah, the Exalted, involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him.

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.

***“Respond to your Lord before a Day comes from Allah of which there is no repelling. No refuge will you have that Day...”***

Responding to Allah, the Exalted, involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. 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.

***“Respond to your Lord before a Day comes from Allah of which there is no repelling. No refuge will you have that Day...”***

Responding to Allah, the Exalted, involves sincerity.

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 Allah, the Exalted, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran and to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*“And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion.....”*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

***“Respond to your Lord before a Day comes from Allah of which there is no repelling. No refuge will you have that Day...”***

Responding to Allah, the Exalted, involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

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.

***“Respond to your Lord before a Day comes from Allah of which there is no repelling. No refuge will you have that Day...”***

Responding to Allah, the Exalted, involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

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.

***“Respond to your Lord before a Day comes from Allah of which there is no repelling. No refuge will you have that Day...”***

Ignorance prevents one from obtaining certainty in respect to the Day of Judgement and this prevents one from practically preparing for it.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“Respond to your Lord before a Day comes from Allah of which there is no repelling. No refuge will you have that Day...”***

Ignorance prevents one from obtaining certainty in respect to the Day of Judgement and this prevents one from practically preparing for it.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it

weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“Respond to your Lord before a Day comes from Allah of which there is no repelling. No refuge will you have that Day, nor for you will there be any denial.”***

As indicated in this verse, when one accepts the truth on the Day of Judgement it will not benefit them unless they accepted it during their life on Earth.

It is important for muslims to understand that whenever they face any type of worldly failure or regrets they should remind themselves of the regrets in the hereafter some people will have, such as the one mentioned in chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

*“He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.””*

In this world one's regret will always be followed by another chance or other options which they can pursue in order to gain success once again. But the regret and failure of the hereafter is something which cannot be rectified meaning, there are no second chances in the next world. No one will have the opportunity to return to Earth in order to act differently.

Therefore, every muslim should be more concerned with the failures they may encounter in the hereafter over the failures and regrets of this

world. This does not mean one should not strive to achieve lawful success in this world. It means they should always prioritise gaining success in the hereafter over gaining success in this world. This is an important mentality muslims should adopt before they reach a day where reflecting on their failures and regrets will not help them in the slightest. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“Respond to your Lord before a Day comes from Allah of which there is no repelling...But if they turn away - then We have not sent you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], over them as a guardian; upon you is only [the duty of] notification...”***

It is important for muslims to understand an important point in respect to advising others. It is the duty of muslims to advise others towards good and forbid evil but a muslim should not behave as if they have been put in charge as controllers over others. This attitude only leads to anger and bitterness especially, when others do not follow their advice. It is best for muslims to discharge their duty by advising others but they should avoid stressing over the outcome of their advice meaning, whether the person acts on their advice or not. If Allah, the Exalted, advised the greatest teacher and guide of mankind namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to stress over the outcome in many places of the Holy Quran how can a muslim claim or behave as if they have been put in charge of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

*“So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”*

The muslim who behaves as a controller will not only become bitter when people fail to follow their advice but it can lead them to giving up advising others which is a duty on all muslims according to their ability.

In addition, this attitude will also cause muslims to neglect themselves and their own duties as they are too busy concerning themselves with the duties of others. Therefore, muslims should remain firm in commanding good and forbidding evil but refrain from observing and bothering about the outcome of their advice.

***“Respond to your Lord before a Day comes from Allah of which there is no repelling...But if they turn away - then We have not sent you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], over them as a guardian; upon you is only [the duty of] notification...”***

As all people have not been created the same they are bound to disagree on certain things. In matters related to religion and those which differentiate between lawful and unlawful things a muslim must remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of who challenges or disagrees with them. But in matters where the choice is between to lawful worldly options a muslim is entitled to offer their opinion to others when they are requested to. But they should not waste their time nor stress if others disagree with their opinion. When one holds onto these disagreements over time they can cause enmity to build up between people which can lead to fractured and broken relationships. This can even result in the sin of severing ties with people. So in cases like this it is important for muslims to let things go and not harbour a negative feeling towards someone who disagrees with their opinion and choice. They should instead push themselves to agree to disagree and move on from the situation without any ill feelings. The one who fails to do this will find themselves always arguing and possessing enmity for others as they are bound to disagree with others on certain topics and issues due to a difference in their characteristics and mentality. Understanding and acting on this advice is a branch of finding peace in this world.

***“And indeed, when We let man taste mercy from Us...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is infinitely bountiful and bestows favours and blessings without recompense or external cause. He gives generously without being asked.

The muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to 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]...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by bestowing the blessings they have been given to others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted.

The one who gives to others will be given more than they could have ever imagined. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.”*

***“...And indeed, when We let man taste mercy from Us, he [overly] rejoices in it...”***

Muslims often increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, such as attending the Mosques for the congregational prayers or reciting more spiritual exercises in times of difficulty. But in times of ease they often relax and become lazy. But it is important to note, that generally it is more important to be more on guard and increase one's obedience during times of ease than times of difficulty. This is because one often sins more during times of ease than difficulty, such as abandoning their obligatory duties. If one reviews the different misguided people in history, such as Pharaoh and Quroon they will observe that their sins only multiplied during times of ease. Someone who is facing a difficulty where they are stuck and have no option but to patiently wait for relief is less likely to sin as they desire to be relieved of their difficulty. Whereas, a person experiencing times of ease will be in a better position to enjoy and over indulge in worldly things which often leads to sins. For example, a person facing poverty is less likely to sin as many sins require wealth. Whereas, a wealthy person is in an easier position to commit those sins, such as purchasing alcohol or drugs. Therefore, muslims should take note of this and ensure they maintain or even increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, during times of ease so that they do not fall into sins and disobedience.

In addition, the one who is obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands and refraining from His prohibitions during times of ease will gain the support of Allah, the Exalted, during their times of difficulty which will aid them to overcome them successfully. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

*“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”*

***“...but if evil afflicts him for what his hands have put forth...”***

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 492, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a muslim does not face any type of physical difficulty, irrespective of its size, such as a prick of a thorn, or any emotional difficulty, such as stress, except Allah, the Exalted, erases their sins because of it.

This refers to minor sins as major sins require sincere repentance. This outcome occurs when a muslim remains patient from the onset of the difficulty until the end of their life. This is important to understand as many people believe they can complain initially and then show patience after. This is not true patience instead it is only acceptance which occurs with the passing of time. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1870. In addition, patience needs to be shown throughout one's life as a person can destroy their reward by showing impatience down the line.

A muslim should remember that it is far better to have their minor sins erased through these difficulties than to reach the Day of Judgment while still possessing them. A muslim should constantly repent and strive to perform righteous deeds in order to erase their minor sins. And if they encounter any physical or emotional difficulties they should remain patient hoping for their minor sins to be erased and to obtain an uncountable reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

***“...but if evil afflicts him for what his hands have put forth...”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“...but if evil afflicts him for what his hands have put forth...”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“...And indeed, when We let man taste mercy from Us, he rejoices in it; but if evil afflicts him for what his hands have put forth, then indeed, man is ungrateful.”***

It is important for muslims to recognize why their worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. 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 disobedience]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”*

As they obey Allah, the Exalted, in order to receive worldly blessings the moment they fail to receive them or encounter a difficulty they often become angered which turns them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. These people often obey and disobey Allah, the Exalted, according to the situation they are facing which in reality contradicts true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though, desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, is acceptable in Islam yet, if one persists with this attitude they may become like those mentioned in this verse. It is far better to worship

Allah, the Exalted, in order to be saved in the hereafter and obtain Paradise. This person is unlikely to alter their behaviour when encountering difficulties. But the highest and best reason is to obey Allah, the Exalted, simply because He is their Lord and the Lord of the universe. This muslim, if sincere, will remain steadfast in all situations and through this obedience they will be granted both worldly and religious blessings which outstrip the worldly blessings the first type of person would ever receive.

To conclude, it is important for muslims to reflect on their intention and if necessary correct it so that it encourages them to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in all situations.

***“...And indeed, when We let man taste mercy from Us, he rejoices in it; but if evil afflicts him for what his hands have put forth, then indeed, man is ungrateful.”***

A muslim must avoid this behaviour and instead remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, during both times of difficulties and ease.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every situation is blessed for a believer. The only condition is that they need to respond to each situation they encounter while obeying Allah, the Exalted, specifically, patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease.

There are two aspects of life. One aspect are the situations people find themselves in whether they are times of ease or difficulties. The control of what situation a person faces is out of their hands. Allah, the Exalted, has decided this and there is no escaping them. Therefore, stressing over the situations one faces does not make sense as they are destined and therefore inevitable. The other aspect is a person's reaction to each situation. This is in each person's control and this is what they are judged on for example, showing patience or impatience in a difficult situation. Therefore, a muslim must concentrate on their behaviour and reaction in each situation instead of stressing over being in a situation as this is unavoidable. If a muslim desires to succeed in both worlds they should assess each situation and always act in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. For example, in times of ease they must use the blessings

they possess as prescribed by Islam which is true gratitude to 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]...”*

And in times of difficulty they must show patience knowing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind the choices. 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.”*

***“...then indeed, man is ungrateful.”***

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.

***“...then indeed, man is ungrateful.”***

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.

Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verses 49-50

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۗ يَهَبُ  
لِمَن يَشَاءُ إِنثًا وَيَهَبُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ الذُّكُورَ ﴿٤٩﴾

أَوْ يُزَوِّجُهُمْ ذُكْرَانًا وَإِنثًا ۗ وَيَجْعَلُ مَن يَشَاءُ عَاقِمًا ۗ إِنَّهُ  
عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

*“To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; He creates what He wills. He gives to whom He wills female [children], and He gives to whom He wills males.*

*Or He makes them [both] males and females, and He renders whom He wills barren. Indeed, He is Knowing and Competent.”*

***“To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who possesses all sovereignty which is free of all defects. It is a sovereignty which has no beginning, no end, no reduction and no limit. Allah, the Exalted, has complete and total control over the creation through management and judgment without any limitations, partners or helpers. The King cannot be hindered or prevented from carrying out His will.

By accepting Allah, the Exalted, as the only King a muslim indirectly accepts their servanthood to Him. Therefore, they must fulfil all His commands and avoid all His prohibitions. A true servant never questions the wise decisions of the King and instead submits with full trust to His choices knowing that the wise King only decrees the best for His servant. 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.”*

When a muslim recognises Allah, the Exalted, as the King they will not turn to another when seeking help and instead only seek His support through sincere obedience to Him. They will always remember if they obey the King He will protect them from the creation. But if they obey the creation over Allah, the Exalted, the creation will not be able to protect them from the

punishment of the only King. This is indicated in a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. He declared that there is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator.

A muslim should adopt this characteristic according to their status by purifying their inner spiritual king namely, the spiritual heart through acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will cause their servants meaning, their bodily limbs, to obey their spiritual heart in acts of righteousness. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that if the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body will be pure but if the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body will become corrupt. One should not become a slave of their evil desires and instead become a true king which controls their desires according to the teachings of Islam.

Whoever perfects this will be given a spiritual kingdom in both worlds. The ultimate destination of the one who fulfils the rights of the King by perfecting servanthood has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. They will be granted a high station in the presence of the only Omnipotent King. Chapter 54 Al Qamar, verse 55:

*“In a seat of honour near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”*

***“...He creates what He wills. He gives to whom He wills female [children], and He gives to whom He wills males. Or He makes them [both] males and females...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is Al Khaliq, which means the Creator, Al Baari which means the Maker and Al Musawwir which means the Fashioner.

The Creator is the One who brings something into existence. In reality, there is no Creator except Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One who creates without any aid from another. On other hand, an inventor only invents things through the aid of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 96:

*“While Allah created you and that which you do?”*

The Maker is the One who arranges all of the creation and prepares them for receiving the forms He has chosen for them which is linked to the next divine name mentioned earlier namely, the Fashioner.

The Creator makes things manifest. The Maker chooses their shape, appearance, and time of creation. The Fashioner fashions the creation according to His divine will.

After understanding these divine names a muslim must trust Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. If Allah, the Exalted, created and manages the entire universe He is more than capable in sorting out a person's problems. In addition, these names indicate that Allah, the Exalted, is the One who creates and chooses all things. So a muslim should not challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to nothing except disappointment. It is therefore better to submit obediently and patiently await relief knowing that Allah, the Exalted, only decrees the best for His servants even if this wisdom is not obvious to them. As a muslim is short sighted it is better to trust in the Creator whose wisdom has no limits. 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.”*

***“...He creates what He wills. He gives to whom He wills female [children], and He gives to whom He wills males. Or He makes them [both] males and females...”***

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.

***“...He creates what He wills. He gives to whom He wills female [children], and He gives to whom He wills males. Or He makes them [both] males and females...”***

The fact that females are mentioned first indicates that they are undoubtedly a blessing and mercy from Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 78, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave glad tidings of Paradise to the parents who correctly raise and take care of two daughters. It is surprising how many muslims especially, Asians always desire sons and have adopted the ignorant mentality of not being as pleased when they have daughters even though this type of glad tidings mentioned in this Hadith and many others have not been given regarding having sons. It is acceptable to believe that a parent would stress more over a daughter than a son especially, in this day and age, but none the less it does not mean muslim parents should be less happy if they have a daughter instead of a son. They should remember that their duty is to educate and guide their children according to the teachings of Islam and not stress over their destiny as this is not in their control.

Disliking having daughters is a foolish mentality associated with the ignorant idol worshippers of Mecca who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Muslim should therefore avoid adopting this mentality and instead be content with any child they are given as they are plenty of married couples who do not have any children. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verses 58-59:

*“And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide.”*

***“...He creates what He wills. He gives to whom He wills female [children], and He gives to whom He wills males. Or He makes them [both] males and females, and He renders whom He wills barren...”***

There are many muslims who desire lawful things, such as a child and instead of being content with what Allah, the Exalted, chose for them they instead pursue their desires in lawful ways such as spiritual exercises based on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is obviously permissible in Islam. Yet, after all this effort and stress they do not understand nor act on a simple but profound teaching of Islam which would aid them in their quest. In fact, they often act in certain ways which only reduces the chances of their request being fulfilled. For example, a muslim does not need to be a scholar to understand that it is less likely for a muslim to obtain what they desire if the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is removed from them. For Example, this can occur when one lies in order to make others laugh. In fact, this person has been cursed three times in one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315. A curse results in the removal of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Some of these muslims who desperately desire things from Allah, the Exalted, also backbite and slander others. This also leads to the removal of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 104 Al Humazah, verse 1:

*“Woe to every scorner and mocker.”*

There are many other examples which lead to the removal of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, which in turn dramatically reduces the chances of one's

request being fulfilled. Muslims should therefore act on this important principle by seeking and acting on knowledge before seeking other means such as spiritual exercises in order to fulfil their lawful desires as these things will not aid them in fulfilling their requests until they correct their behaviour.

***“...He creates what He wills. He gives to whom He wills female [children], and He gives to whom He wills males. Or He makes them [both] males and females, and He renders whom He wills barren...”***

When some face difficulties instead of firstly observing themselves and their behaviour to assess whether they need to change for the better and remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, patiently waiting for relief they instead turn to uneducated and inexperienced people who claim to fix worldly things through spiritual means. These people only cause a muslim to adopt an illness which is far worse than their initial problem namely, paranoia. These people convince muslims that their problems have either been caused by supernatural creatures, such as jinns, or by black magic which someone has used against them. Even though jinns do exist it is very rare for them to affect people in their worldly matters. This incorrect advice causes muslims to become severely paranoid and superstitious over petty things and it even causes them to grow suspicious over their friends and relatives. This only leads to enmity and fractured relationships. This attitude will also damage one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, as they will be advised in many cases to do things which are not advised in the Holy Quran or the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for muslims to strengthen their faith through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. This will prevent them turning to such foolish people who cannot even fix their own problems let alone fix the problems of others. Strong faith will prevent paranoia affecting them as they will fully rely on Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. Strong faith allows a muslim to understand that even if the entire creation desired to harm them they will not be able to do so unless Allah, the Exalted, allowed it. Similarly, the

entire creation cannot benefit them unless Allah, the Exalted, wills it. And every case and situation only occurs according to a set and unchangeable plan namely, destiny. This has been advised throughout the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as the far reaching Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516.

To conclude, a muslim when encountering a problem should firstly assess their own behaviour and rectify it if necessary and then remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and avoid further problems in the form of paranoia by avoiding people who claim to fix worldly problems in spiritual ways.

***“...Indeed, He is Knowing...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“...Indeed, He is...Competent.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who over powers all things, who in reality is the only One who possesses power and might. Anyone else who possesses strength only does so because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. There is no atom in this world or in the next that can escape the power and authority of Allah, the Exalted.

As all power belongs to Allah, the Exalted, a muslim should therefore always remember that the strength to perform righteous deeds and refrain from sins comes from Allah, the Exalted, alone. This will remove any chance of pride creeping into their heart. An atom's worth of which is enough to take a person to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Whoever desires for their faith to become mighty must obey the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be granted strong faith which will aid them to overcome all difficulties so that they leave this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. True obedience only lies in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. 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.”*

Truly Knowing Allah, the Exalted, is All Mighty should prevent a muslim from sinning. As they should know there is no way to escape the might of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, when a muslim engraves this divine name into their heart it prevents them from committing oppression and wronging others. They become fully aware that even if there is no person powerful enough to seek justice from them Allah, the Exalted, will certainly take them to account and punish them in both worlds. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, oppression to others may cause the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted, to hurl them into Hell on Judgment Day.

Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verse 51

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَائِ  
جِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بآذِنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلَى  
حَكِيمٌ ﴾

*“And it is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a partition or that He sends a messenger [i.e., angel] to reveal, by His permission, what He wills. Indeed, He is Most High and Wise.”*

***“And it is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a partition or that He sends a messenger [i.e., angel] to reveal, by His permission, what He wills...”***

The non-muslims would request absurd things from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as receiving divine revelation from Allah, the Exalted. Their intention was not to gain understanding but only to cause stress to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and confuse others. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 118:

*“Those who do not know say, “Why does Allāh not speak to us or there come to us a sign?” Thus spoke those before them like their words...”*

In addition, according to Imam Al Wahidi’s, Asbab Al Nuzul, 42:51, Page 136, some Jewish scholars challenged the claim of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by claiming that if he did not speak directly or see Allah, the Exalted, then he could not be a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them.

It is important for muslims especially, in this day and age to understand the difference between those who discuss certain topics which may be considered controversial in order to genuinely benefit people through a positive change and those who simply discuss these issues in order to

attract the attention of others. Those who desire a positive change in society will always show respect and good character towards others especially, to those they are challenging through their words. They never resort to vulgar language or actions in order to declare their point of view. They instead study and understand the subject they are debating about without misinterpreting or falsifying information in order to support their point of view. Their criticism is always constructive and their genuine and sincere intention to improve the society is shown through their behaviour and words. These are the people who Muslims should pay attention to as if they are correct it will improve society for everyone. But if their viewpoint is wrong they will accept the truth when it is made clear to them by others. But those who behave opposite to this correct attitude, whether they are found in the media or anywhere else, should simply be ignored as they do not desire to improve the lives of people. They are starved for attention and like an infant act out in order to attract some attention from others. Muslims should not circulate and pass on videos or other content which are linked to people like this as they are playing right into their hands and giving them the attention they so badly desire. Debating with these people is a complete waste of time because of their evil intention and behaviour. Muslims should instead place their efforts in other useful places which benefit them and others in both worlds.

***“And it is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a partition or that He sends a messenger [i.e., angel] to reveal, by His permission, what He wills...”***

The non-muslims would request absurd things from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as receiving divine revelation from Allah, the Exalted. Their intention was not to gain understanding but only to cause stress to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and confuse others. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 118:

*“Those who do not know say, “Why does Allāh not speak to us or there come to us a sign?” Thus spoke those before them like their words...”*

In addition, according to Imam Al Wahidi’s, Asbab Al Nuzul, 42:51, Page 136, some Jewish scholars challenged the claim of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by claiming that if he did not speak directly or see Allah, the Exalted, then he could not be a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them.

Whenever one invites others towards Islam, commands good and forbids evil they will be challenging the heedless lifestyle of many others which will inspire them to resist the truth anyway they can. The major reason all the past nations rejected their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, was due to

this very reason. They could not abandon their lifestyles and characteristics and in defense of them were prepared to wage war against Allah, the Exalted, and their Holy Prophet, peace be upon him. When one takes up this important duty they must be prepared to face many hardships caused by others including their own relatives. The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, are the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they encountered countless difficulties from their nations. One only needs to study the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to observe this fact. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472, that no one in creation had been persecuted in the path of Allah, the Exalted, more than him.

In cases like this one's response to the bad attitude of others should be educated, respectful and gentle. An example of this is found in chapter 19 Maryam, verses 46-47:

*"[His father] said, "Have you no desire for my gods, O Abraham? If you do not desist, I will surely stone you, so avoid me a prolonged time."  
[Abraham] said, "Peace [i.e., safety] will be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Indeed, He is ever gracious to me."*

Here the kind and respectful response of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, to the harsh attitude of his elder is discussed.

In most cases, a person must possess a character flaw if they claim to get along with everyone. Due to the differences within the members of society a person will never get along with everyone. They will always be one or more that disagree with their mentality, life style and advice. This diversity will lead to tension and occasionally problems. But if a person is liked by everyone then in most cases it shows they have adopted the mentality of the hypocrites by being two-faced. If the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were not loved by all how can a normal person achieve this status? This is the reason one should not believe in propaganda as the group that were mistreated the most in this way were the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023.

For example, the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, was once falsely accused of illegal relations by a shameless woman. She was enticed into slandering him by the enemy of Allah, the Exalted, Quraoon. When she accused the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, publically during a religious gathering he interrogated her. When she observed his reaction she immediately retracted her accusation and admitted the truth. As a result Allah, the Exalted, destroyed Quraoon by commanding the Earth to swallow him and his great treasury. This incident has been recorded in Imam Dhahabi's, The Major Sins, Pages 166-167. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 81:

*“And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home...”*

The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were slandered on many occasions but they remained steadfast on their mission until they were granted victory by Allah, the Exalted. When Allah, the Exalted, decides to complete a task like aiding the one who spreads the true word of faith the entire creation combined cannot stop Him.

Muslims must accept that they too will face hardships when spreading the word of Islam. Therefore, they must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, by remaining steadfast in the face of difficulties. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. If one desires to join them in the next world they must adopt this attitude also.

***“...Indeed, He is Most High...”***

The divine essence and attributes of Allah, the Exalted, are infinitely high and beyond the reach and comprehension of the entire creation. The one who understands this divine name will only obey Allah, the Exalted, as nothing has a higher authority, power or control than Him.

A muslim must act on this divine name by raising their aims and aspirations so they go beyond this material world and are instead directed towards the hereafter. Higher still is the aspiration which is fully focused on Allah, the Exalted, and nothing else. A muslim should also act on this divine name by raising their moral character so that they surpass bad and base character thereby following in the footsteps 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.”*

This noble character should be shown both to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience to Him, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and it must be shown to people by treating them how one desires to be treated by people.

***“...Indeed, He is...Wise.”***

Allah, the Exalted, possesses infinite knowledge of all things and their real nature and acts according to His infinite wisdom in a perfect manner. The muslim who understands this divine name will never object to His choices and decrees knowing that there is wisdom behind each choice of Allah, the Exalted, which benefits His servants even if they are not obvious to 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 act on this divine name by using their knowledge and blessings according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, as this is the ultimate wisdom a person can possess.

## Chapter 42 – Ash Shuraa, Verses 52-53

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا  
الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَن نَّشَاءُ  
مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدَىٰ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

صِرَاطِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَلَا إِلَىٰ  
اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٥٣﴾

*“And thus We have revealed to you an inspiration of Our command [the Quran]. You did not know what is the Book or [what is] faith, but We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants. And indeed you guide to a straight path.*

*The path of Allah, to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Unquestionably, to Allah do [all] matters evolve [i.e., return].”*

***“And thus We have revealed to you an inspiration of Our command [the Quran]...but We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants...”***

This guidance is available for all who fulfil the rights of the Holy Quran.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete

loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“And thus We have revealed to you an inspiration of Our command [the Quran]...but We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants...”***

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is

good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“...You [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] did not know what is the Book or [what is] faith...”***

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was reciting truthful historical accounts and beneficial lessons even though he was unlettered and had not studied the previous divine scriptures, which the non-Muslims of Mecca full well knew, was a clear sign of his Prophethood.

This was supported by the fact that they themselves testified to his sincerity and honesty. In fact, during his childhood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always under the protection of Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the evils that were widespread during the age of ignorance: the time before Islam. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached maturity he was the finest person among his people, the best of them in character and repute, the best of neighbours, the most prudent, the most honest in speech and most trustworthy. He was completely removed from immorality and other evil characteristics. Because of this he became known among the people of Mecca as Al Amin, the trustworthy. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 1, Page 180.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spent his entire life amongst the non-Muslims of Mecca was enough of a proof of his declaration of Prophethood. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, invited the non-Muslims of

Mecca to embrace Islam he used his 40 years amongst them as proof that he was speaking the truth. This evidence was undeniable even by the non-Muslims. This incident is recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4553. Only the arrogance of some prevented them from submitting to the truth. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

*“...for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?”*

***“...You [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] did not know what is the Book or [what is] faith...”***

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 indeed, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] you guide to a straight path. The path of Allāh...”***

One will only obtain this guidance when they sincerely obey and follow 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.

***“...Allāh, to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who possesses all sovereignty which is free of all defects. It is a sovereignty which has no beginning, no end, no reduction and no limit. Allah, the Exalted, has complete and total control over the creation through management and judgment without any limitations, partners or helpers. The King cannot be hindered or prevented from carrying out His will.

By accepting Allah, the Exalted, as the only King a muslim indirectly accepts their servanthood to Him. Therefore, they must fulfil all His commands and avoid all His prohibitions. A true servant never questions the wise decisions of the King and instead submits with full trust to His choices knowing that the wise King only decrees the best for His servant. 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.”*

When a muslim recognises Allah, the Exalted, as the King they will not turn to another when seeking help and instead only seek His support through sincere obedience to Him. They will always remember if they obey the King He will protect them from the creation. But if they obey the creation over

Allah, the Exalted, the creation will not be able to protect them from the punishment of the only King. This is indicated in a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. He declared that there is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator.

A muslim should adopt this characteristic according to their status by purifying their inner spiritual king namely, the spiritual heart through acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will cause their servants meaning, their bodily limbs, to obey their spiritual heart in acts of righteousness. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that if the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body will be pure but if the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body will become corrupt. One should not become a slave of their evil desires and instead become a true king which controls their desires according to the teachings of Islam.

Whoever perfects this will be given a spiritual kingdom in both worlds. The ultimate destination of the one who fulfils the rights of the King by perfecting servanthood has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. They will be granted a high station in the presence of the only Omnipotent King. Chapter 54 Al Qamar, verse 55:

*“In a seat of honour near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”*

***“...Unquestionably, to Allāh do [all] matters evolve [i.e., return].”***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, there are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But there are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

*“Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”*

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe

that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

***“...Unquestionably, to Allāh do [all] matters evolve [i.e., return].”***

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.

***“...Unquestionably, to Allāh do [all] matters evolve [i.e., return].”***

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.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verse 1



“Ḥā, Meem.”

## **“Ḥā, Meem.”**

Even though the actual meaning of these verses found within the Holy Quran are unknown using letters from the alphabet does indicate the importance of education and knowledge.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

## Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 2-4

وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٢﴾

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣﴾

وَإِنَّهُ فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلِيَّ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾

*“By the clear Book.*

*Indeed, We have made it an Arabic Quran that you might understand.*

*And indeed it is, in the Mother of the Book [Preserved Tablet] with Us,  
exalted and full of wisdom.”*

***“By the clear Book. Indeed, We have made it an Arabic Quran that you might understand.”***

The non-Muslims of Mecca spent their lives with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and full-well knew he was no liar. As they were masters of the Arabic language they full-well knew that the Holy Quran was not the words of a man.

For example, one of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, Walid Bin Mughira, once held a meeting with the other non-Muslim leaders of Mecca during the time of the Holy Pilgrimage. The Holy Pilgrimage did exist before the coming of Islam but the correct practices of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been completely changed. He advised the other leaders that soon many people would enter Mecca because of the Holy Pilgrimage and they will come across the message of Islam so they needed to unanimously agree on what to say about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to deter people from accepting Islam. Someone advised that they should label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a soothsayer. But Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not a soothsayer as he did not possess any of their crazy characteristics therefore people would not accept this. Another advised that they should tell people the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was crazy and was possessed by evil spirits. But Walid replied that it was obvious this was not true as these signs were not apparent in him. Finally, someone advised to label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a poet so that people would not pay attention to what he says. But again Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Quran or his speech were not poetry as the Arabs

were masters of poetry. Walid advised everyone to claim that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a sorcerer whose goals were to cause separation between people and their religion and divisions within families. After agreeing to this plan they dispersed and waited for people to flood into Mecca for the Holy Pilgrimage and warned them not to pay attention to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they claimed he was a sorcerer. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 362.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was reciting truthful historical accounts and beneficial lessons even though he was unlettered and had not studied the previous divine scriptures, which the non-Muslims of Mecca full well knew, was a clear sign of his Prophethood.

This was supported by the fact that they themselves testified to his sincerity and honesty. In fact, during his childhood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always under the protection of Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the evils that were widespread during the age of ignorance: the time before Islam. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached maturity he was the finest person among his people, the best of them in character and repute, the best of neighbours, the most prudent, the most honest in speech and most trustworthy. He was completely removed from immorality and other evil characteristics. Because of this he became known among the people of Mecca as Al Amin, the trustworthy. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, The Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 180.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spent his entire life amongst the non-Muslims of Mecca was enough of a proof of his declaration of Prophethood. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, invited the non-Muslims of Mecca to embrace Islam he used his 40 years amongst them as proof that he was speaking the truth. This evidence was undeniable even by the non-Muslims. This incident is recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4553. Only the arrogance of some prevented them from submitting to the truth. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

*"...for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"*

***“By the clear Book...And indeed it is, in the Mother of the Book [Preserved Tablet] with Us, exalted and full of wisdom.”***

One will only benefit from the Holy Quran when they fulfil its rights.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete

loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

## Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 5-8

أَفَنضْرِبُ عَنْكُمْ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا أَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا  
مُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٥﴾

وَكَمْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ نَبِيِّ فِي الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٦﴾

وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٧﴾

فَأَهْلَكْنَا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا وَمَضَىٰ مَثَلُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٨﴾

*“Then should We turn the message away, disregarding you, because you are a transgressing people?”*

*And how many a prophet We sent among the former peoples.*

*But there would not come to them a prophet except that they used to ridicule him.*

*And We destroyed greater than them in [striking] power, and the example of the former peoples has preceded.”*

***“Then should We turn the message away, disregarding you, because you are a transgressing people?”***

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

***“Then should We turn the message away, disregarding you, because you are a transgressing people?”***

Allah, the Exalted, will not remove the guidance He has granted mankind. It is up to them whether they desire to be rightly guided or not.

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in

evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“And how many a prophet We sent among the former peoples. But there would not come to them a prophet except that they used to ridicule him.”***

Whenever one invites others towards Islam, commands good and forbids evil they will be challenging the heedless lifestyle of many others which will inspire them to resist the truth anyway they can. The major reason all the past nations rejected their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, was due to this very reason. They could not abandon their lifestyles and characteristics and in defense of them were prepared to wage war against Allah, the Exalted, and their Holy Prophet, peace be upon him. When one takes up this important duty they must be prepared to face many hardships caused by others including their own relatives. The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, are the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they encountered countless difficulties from their nations. One only needs to study the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to observe this fact. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472, that no one in creation had been persecuted in the path of Allah, the Exalted, more than him.

In cases like this one's response to the bad attitude of others should be educated, respectful and gentle. An example of this is found in chapter 19 Maryam, verses 46-47:

*“[His father] said, "Have you no desire for my gods, O Abraham? If you do not desist, I will surely stone you, so avoid me a prolonged time.”*

*[Abraham] said, "Peace [i.e., safety] will be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Indeed, He is ever gracious to me."*

Here the kind and respectful response of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, to the harsh attitude of his elder is discussed.

In most cases, a person must possess a character flaw if they claim to get along with everyone. Due to the differences within the members of society a person will never get along with everyone. They will always be one or more that disagree with their mentality, life style and advice. This diversity will lead to tension and occasionally problems. But if a person is liked by everyone then in most cases it shows they have adopted the mentality of the hypocrites by being two-faced. If the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were not loved by all how can a normal person achieve this status? This is the reason one should not believe in propaganda as the group that were mistreated the most in this way were the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023.

For example, the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, was once falsely accused of illegal relations by a shameless woman. She was enticed into slandering him by the enemy of Allah, the Exalted, Quraon. When she accused the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, publically during a religious gathering he interrogated her. When she observed his reaction she immediately retracted her accusation and admitted the truth. As a result Allah, the Exalted, destroyed Quraon by commanding the Earth to swallow him and his great treasury. This incident has been recorded in

Imam Dhahabi's, The Major Sins, Pages 166-167. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 81:

*“And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home...”*

The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were slandered on many occasions but they remained steadfast on their mission until they were granted victory by Allah, the Exalted. When Allah, the Exalted, decides to complete a task like aiding the one who spreads the true word of faith the entire creation combined cannot stop Him.

Muslims must accept that they too will face hardships when spreading the word of Islam. Therefore, they must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, by remaining steadfast in the face of difficulties. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. If one desires to join them in the next world they must adopt this attitude also.

***“And how many a prophet We sent among the former peoples. But there would not come to them a prophet except that they used to ridicule him.”***

Generally speaking, it is important to understand that generally when one chooses a path which is different from the path of others, such as their relatives and friends, they will face criticism and resistance from them. In fact, the majority of criticism comes from a person's relatives. For example, when a muslim decides to concentrate more on acting on the teachings of Islam and if it is something their family have not pursued themselves then they will face criticism from them. They will be labelled foolish and extreme by those who they believed would support them on their path. It is important for muslims to remain steadfast on the lawful path they choose and trust in the help of Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in order to overcome these difficulties.

This is a common reaction from people for when a person chooses a different path in life from others it makes them feel as if their path is bad or evil and this is the reason the person has chosen a different path. Even though the person does not believe this but only chooses a different path believing it is better for them yet they will still face criticism. It is the same reason all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were criticised by their people as they chose and passively invited others to a different better path.

To conclude, as long as one's path in life is lawful they should remain steadfast and not be deterred by the criticism of others. But this does not

mean they should not try to improve their situation and character. It means they should not be deterred from pursuing their lawful choice according to the teachings of Islam.

***“And how many a prophet We sent among the former peoples. But there would not come to them a prophet except that they used to ridicule him. And We destroyed greater than them [non-muslims of Mecca] in [striking] power, and the example of the former peoples has preceded.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their

victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And how many a prophet We sent among the former peoples. But there would not come to them a prophet except that they used to ridicule him. And We destroyed greater than them [non-muslims of Mecca] in [striking] power, and the example of the former peoples has preceded.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“And how many a prophet We sent among the former peoples. But there would not come to them a prophet except that they used to ridicule him. And We destroyed greater than them [non-muslims of Mecca] in [striking] power, and the example of the former peoples has preceded.”***

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 9-14

وَلَيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُم مِّنْ خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَيَقُولُنَّ  
خَلَقَهُنَّ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٩﴾

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا  
سُبُلًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

وَالَّذِي نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَنْشَرْنَا بِهِ بَلْدَةً  
مَّيْتًا كَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿١١﴾

وَالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنَ الْفُلكِ  
وَالْأَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

لِتَسْتَوُوا عَلَى ظُهُورِهِ ثُمَّ تَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ إِذَا اسْتَوَيْتُمْ  
عَلَيْهِ وَتَقُولُوا سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا  
لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

وَإِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

*“And if you should ask them [non-muslims of Mecca], "Who has created the heavens and the earth?" they would surely say, "They were created by the Exalted in Might, the Knowing,"*

*[The One] Who has made for you the earth a bed and made for you upon it roads that you might be guided.*

*And Who sends down rain from the sky in measured amounts, and We revive thereby a dead land - thus will you be brought forth.*

*And Who created the species, all of them, and has made for you of ships and animals those which you mount.*

*That you may settle yourselves upon their backs and then remember the favor of your Lord when you have settled upon them and say, "Exalted is He who has subjected this to us, and we could not have [otherwise] subdued it.*

*And indeed we, to our Lord, will [surely] return.”*

***“And if you should ask them [non-muslims of Mecca], “Who has created the heavens and the earth?” they would surely say, “They were created by the Exalted in Might, the Knowing.” [The one] who has made for you the earth a bed and made for you upon it roads that you might be guided.”***

The non-muslims of Mecca did believe in Allah, the Exalted, yet foolishly and without evidence ascribed partners to Him.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire

the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

***“...would surely say, "They were created by the Exalted in Might..."”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who over powers all things, who in reality is the only One who possesses power and might. Anyone else who possesses strength only does so because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. There is no atom in this world or in the next that can escape the power and authority of Allah, the Exalted.

As all power belongs to Allah, the Exalted, a muslim should therefore always remember that the strength to perform righteous deeds and refrain from sins comes from Allah, the Exalted, alone. This will remove any chance of pride creeping into their heart. An atom's worth of which is enough to take a person to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Whoever desires for their faith to become mighty must obey the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be granted strong faith which will aid them to overcome all difficulties so that they leave this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. True obedience only lies in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. 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.”*

Truly Knowing Allah, the Exalted, is All Mighty should prevent a muslim from sinning. As they should know there is no way to escape the might of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, when a muslim engraves this divine name into their heart it prevents them from committing oppression and wronging others. They become fully aware that even if there is no person powerful enough to seek justice from them Allah, the Exalted, will certainly take them to account and punish them in both worlds. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, oppression to others may cause the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted, to hurl them into Hell on Judgment Day.

***“...they would surely say, "They were created by...the Knowing.””***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“And Who sends down rain from the sky in measured amounts, and We revive thereby a dead land...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Creator and Allocator of provision to the entire creation which they need to preserve their physical and spiritual constitutions. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the provision of the entire creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

The one who understands this divine name will rely on Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them as He has planned for them before they were created. They will prove this reliance by striving to gain lawful provision as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, while refraining from anything which is unlawful and doubtful.

It is important to note that as people require physical provision in the form of food and drink. Similarly, the soul of a muslim requires provision also. This provision strengthens it and leads it to eternal bliss. This provision is in the form of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The foundation of all this is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Therefore, muslims should strive to gain this important provision of the soul as well as provision for their physical body. Two elements should be remembered in this respect. Do not exert unlawful and unnecessary efforts in gaining one's guaranteed provision. And do not misuse or waste the provision one gains.

A muslim, should act on this divine name by fulfilling their duty by providing for their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. This includes providing them with both physical and spiritual provision through education. A muslim should also do the same for the needy according to their capacity without fearing poverty for themselves. They should remember the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893, which advises that Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the needs of the muslim who takes care of the needs of others.

***“And Who sends down rain from the sky in measured amounts, and We revive thereby a dead land - thus will you be brought forth.”***

The same way Allah, the Exalted, gives life to a barren land through rain, He will give life to the dead on the Day of Resurrection.

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But

this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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.

***“And Who created the species, all of them, and has made for you of ships...”***

Water has been created with such balance that sea life can thrive within it while huge ships can sail on top of it. If water was more or less denser than this balance would not be possible. This perfect balance indicates a wise Creator namely, Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, in most countries the major part of trading occurs via ships.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that no one has eaten anything better than from the earnings of their own hands.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse laziness for trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Unfortunately, many Muslims turn away from working a lawful occupation, go on social benefits and inhabit the Mosques claiming to trust in Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them. This is not trusting in Allah, the Exalted, at all. It is only laziness which contradicts the teachings of Islam. True trust in Allah, the Exalted, in respect to gaining wealth is to use the means Allah, the Exalted, provided a person, such as their physical strength, in order to obtain lawful wealth according to the teachings of Islam and then trust that Allah, the Exalted, will provide lawful wealth to them through these means. The aim of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is not to

cause one to give up using the means He has created as this would make them useless and Allah, the Exalted, does not create useless things. The purpose of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is to prevent one from earning wealth through doubtful or unlawful means. As a Muslim should firmly believe their provision which includes wealth was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This allocation cannot change under any circumstances. A Muslim's duty is to strive in obtaining this through lawful means which is the tradition of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072. Using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, as He created them for this very purpose. A Muslim should therefore not be lazy while claiming trust in Allah, the Exalted, by going on social benefits when they have the means to earn lawful wealth through their own efforts and the means created and provided to them by Allah, the Exalted.

***“And Who created the species, all of them...and animals those which you mount. That you may settle yourselves upon their backs and then remember the favor of your Lord when you have settled upon them and say, "Exalted is He who has subjected this to us, and we could not have [otherwise] subdued it.””***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is infinitely bountiful and bestows favours and blessings without recompense or external cause. He gives generously without being asked.

The muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to 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]...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by bestowing the blessings they have been given to others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. The one who gives to others will be given more than they could have ever imagined. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.”*

***“And Who created the species, all of them...and animals those which you mount. That you may settle yourselves upon their backs and then remember the favor of your Lord when you have settled upon them and say, "Exalted is He who has subjected this to us, and we could not have [otherwise] subdued it.””***

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.

***“And indeed we, to our Lord, will [surely] return.”***

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.

***“And indeed we, to our Lord, will [surely] return.”***

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 indeed we, to our Lord, will [surely] return.”***

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.

***“And indeed we, to our Lord, will [surely] return.”***

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.

***“[The One] Who has made for you the earth a bed and made for you upon it roads that you might be guided...and say, "...And indeed we, to our Lord, will [surely] return.””***

These set of verses indicate that one's worldly journeys should always remind them of their final journey to the hereafter.

If a person had to cross a country and was presented different paths to choose from such as, a path through a dangerous jungle or over a mountain or through an underground cave an intelligent person would certainly choose the simplest and easiest path. This would allow them to reach their destination safely while achieving peace of mind and body. Only a fool would choose a difficult and dangerous path thereby, unnecessarily burdening themselves.

In reality, each person is on a journey through this world and their destination is the hereafter. Therefore, an intelligent muslim should choose the path through this world which is easy and straight forward in order to reach the hereafter safely. This path consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, 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 only taking from this material world in order to fulfil their necessities and the necessities of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. This would allow them to reach the hereafter safely while obtaining peace of mind and body. But the more one indulges in the excess of this material world and unnecessarily devotes themselves to people and their desires the more difficult their journey

will become. This attitude will only deprive them of peace of mind and body and reduce the chances of them reaching the hereafter safely.

To conclude, muslims must understand that life is a journey so they should therefore be kind to themselves and choose the simple and easy path in order to reach the hereafter safely thereby obtaining peace of mind and body in both worlds.

Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 15-19

وَجَعَلُوا لَهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ جُزْءًا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ  
مُبِينٌ ﴿١٥﴾

أَمْ أُتَّخَذَ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ بِنَاتٍ وَأَصْفَانِكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ بِمَا ضَرَبَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ مَثَلًا ظَلَّ  
وَجْهَهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾

أَوْ مَنْ يُنشَأُ فِي الْوَحْيَةِ وَهُوَ فِي الْخِصَامِ غَيْرُ مُبِينٍ  
﴿١٨﴾

وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنِ شَاءَ  
أَشْهَدُوا خَلَقَهُمْ سَتُكُنُّوا شُهَدَاءَهُمْ وَيَسْأَلُونَ  
﴿١٩﴾

*“But they have attributed to Him from His servants a portion. Indeed, man is clearly ungrateful.*

*Or has He taken, out of what He has created, daughters and chosen you for [having] sons?*

*And when one of them is given good tidings of that which he attributes to the Most Merciful in comparison [a daughter], his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief.*

*So is one brought up in ornaments while being during conflict unevident [attributed to Allah]?*

*And they described the angels, who are servants of the Most Merciful, as females. Did they witness their creation? Their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned.”*

***“But they have attributed to Him from His servants a portion...”***

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.

***“But they have attributed to Him from His servants a portion...Or has He taken, out of what He has created, daughters [Angels]...And they described the angels, who are servants of the Most Merciful, as females. Did they witness their creation?...”***

The non-muslims of Mecca ignorantly believed the Angels were the daughters of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore worshipped them in order to please Allah, the Exalted.

The main reasons for the spread of the false beliefs regarding the Holy Prophet Eesa, were his miraculous birth, the miracles which he performed and his ascension into Heaven while alive. The Holy Quran confirms the miraculous birth of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and proves that his fatherless birth was a sign of the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 47:

*“She [Maryam, may Allah be pleased with her] said, “My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me?” [The angel] said, “Such is Allāh; He creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”*

This miraculous birth does not prove that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine. It only indicates the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 59:

*“Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created him from dust; then He said to him, “Be,” and he was.”*

This verse indicates a simple but profound lesson namely, some wrongfully believe that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, is the son of God as he has no human father. But if this was the criterion for linking him to Allah, the Exalted, then the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, is more fitting for this claim as he has no human father or mother. Reflecting on this verse alone is enough to understand the truth namely, the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, is a righteous servant, Messenger and Holy Prophet of Allah, the Exalted.

The miracles of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, are also verified by the Holy Quran. It however makes it clear that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, performed these miracles with the will, permission and command of Allah, the Exalted. If the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine he would not need the will or permission of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 49:

*“And [make the Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] a messenger to the Children of Israel, [who will say], ‘Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allāh. And I cure the blind [from birth] and the leper, and I give life to the dead -*

*by permission of Allāh. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses..."*

The ascension of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, to the Heavens while alive further indicates the power of Allah, the Exalted, as He took the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, on this journey. If the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine he could have undertaken this journey with his own innate power. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 55:

*"[Mention] when Allāh said, "O Jesus, indeed I will take you and raise you to Myself and purify [i.e., free] you from those who disbelieve..."*

The Holy Quran tells the Christians that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, contrary to their belief, was not crucified. The one whose image was seen on the cross was not the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, but someone who was made to look like him. Allah, the Exalted, had already raised the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, towards Heaven by this time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verses 156-158:

*"And for their disbelief and their saying against Mary a great slander. And [for] their saying, "Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the messenger of Allāh." And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them...Rather, Allāh raised him to Himself."*

The incorrect Christian belief of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, being crucified meaning, killed, is strange in itself as a real divine being is far beyond experiencing death. So in reality, their incorrect belief in his death by crucifixion negates their incorrect belief in his divinity by itself.

Finally, a divine being by nature is something which is self-sustaining meaning, they do not need someone else to sustain them. If a being is sustained by another then they cannot be divine. Both the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and his mother, Maryam, may Allah be pleased with her, were not divine beings as they required nourishment from Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they were not self-sustaining beings. In addition, no one can claim that as the Angels do not eat they can be considered Gods. In reality, they are also sustained by Allah, the Exalted, in a different way so they too are not self-sustaining. The fact that they have been created and will experience death, just like the rest of creation, is enough to negate divinity.

***“But they have attributed to Him from His servants a portion...Or has He taken, out of what He has created, daughters [Angels]...And they described the angels, who are servants of the Most Merciful, as females. Did they witness their creation?...”***

The non-muslims of Mecca ignorantly believed the Angels were the daughters of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore worshipped them in order to please Allah, the Exalted. Their belief was rooted in blindly imitating their forefathers.

A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation.

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.

***“But they have attributed to Him from His servants a portion...Or has He taken, out of what He has created, daughters [Angels]...And they described the angels, who are servants of the Most Merciful, as females. Did they witness their creation?...”***

The non-muslims of Mecca ignorantly believed the Angels were the daughters of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore worshipped them in order to please Allah, the Exalted. Their belief was rooted in blindly imitating their forefathers.

A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation. Blind imitation is even disliked within Islam.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

*“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”*

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five daily obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.

***“...Indeed, man is clearly ungrateful.”***

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. This is similar to the patient who is operated on but feels no pain as they have been anesthetized.

***“...Indeed, man is clearly ungrateful.”***

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.

***“But they have attributed to Him from His servants a portion...Or has He taken, out of what He has created, daughters and chosen you for [having] sons? And when one of them is given good tidings of that which he attributes to the Most Merciful in comparison [i.e., a daughter], his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. So is one brought up in ornaments while being during conflict unevident [attributed to Allāh]?”***

These verses describe the attitude and mentality of the non-muslims of Mecca towards women not the attitude of Islam. Allah, the Exalted, uses their attitude against them by criticising them in a way they could understand. Meaning, they ignorantly disliked having daughters and preferred sons themselves yet happily attributed daughters to Allah, the Exalted. This was ignorance on top of ignorance

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 78, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave glad tidings of Paradise to the parents who correctly raise and take care of two daughters. It is surprising how many muslims especially, Asians always desire sons and have adopted the ignorant mentality of not being as pleased when they have daughters even though this type of glad tidings mentioned in this Hadith and many others have not been given regarding having sons. It is acceptable to believe that a parent would stress more over a daughter than a son especially, in this day and age, but none the less it does not mean muslim parents should be less happy if they have a daughter instead of a son. They should remember that their duty is to educate and guide their children according to the teachings of Islam and not stress over their destiny as this is not in their control.

Disliking having daughters is a foolish mentality associated with the ignorant idol worshippers of Mecca who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Muslim should therefore avoid adopting this mentality and instead be content with any child they are given as they are plenty of married couples who do not have any children. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verses 58-59:

*“And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide.”*

***“...Their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned.”***

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.

***“...Their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned.”***

One must prepare for their Final Judgement by using the blessings they have been granted, such as their speech, 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.

***“...Their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned.”***

One must prepare for their Final Judgement by using the blessings they have been granted, such as their speech, 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.

***“...Their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned.”***

One must prepare for their Final Judgement by using the blessings they have been granted, such as their speech, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 20-25

وَقَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ الرَّحْمَنُ مَا عَبَدْنَاهُمْ مَا لَهُم بِذَلِكَ مِنْ  
عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

أَمْ ءَانَيْنَاهُمْ كِتَابًا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ فَهُمْ بِهِ مُسْتَمْسِكُونَ  
﴿٢١﴾

بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا ءَابَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ ءَاثَرِهِمْ  
مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

وَكَذَلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ  
مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا ءَابَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ ءَاثَرِهِمْ  
مُقْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

﴿٢٤﴾ قُلْ أُولُو جِحْتِكُمْ بِأَهْدَىٰ مِمَّا وَجَدْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ ءَابَاءَكُمْ  
قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾



فَأَنْتَقِمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ

*“And they [non-muslims of Mecca] said, “If the Most Merciful had willed, we would not have worshipped them [other deities].” They have of that no knowledge. They are not but misjudging.*

*Or have We given them a book before it [i.e., the Quran] to which they are adhering?*

*Rather, they say, “Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are in their footsteps [rightly] guided.”*

*And similarly, We did not send before you any warner into a city except that its affluent said, “Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are, in their footsteps, following.”*

*[Each warner] said, “Even if I brought you better guidance than that [religion] upon which you found your fathers?” They said, “Indeed we, in that with which you were sent, are disbelievers.”*

*So We took retribution from them; then see how was the end of the deniers.”*

***“And they [non-muslims of Mecca] said, “If the Most Merciful had willed, we would not have worshipped them [other deities].” They have of that no knowledge. They are not but misjudging.”***

It is important to understand that as destiny is something which is hidden from people it therefore cannot be used as an excuse to commit sins. In addition, Allah, the Exalted, will not question people on the Day of Judgment about their destiny instead He will question them about their intention and actions, which are both under their control. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 23:

*“He is not questioned about what He does [destiny], but they will be questioned.”*

As these two things are under a person’s control their must take responsibility for them whether they like it or not. Just like a police officer who intentionally misuses their training and equipment provided to them by the police force cannot blame the police force for their actions, nor can a person blame Allah, the Exalted, when they intentionally misuse the blessings He has granted them especially, after He has instructed them how to use the blessings correctly.

In addition, it is strange that a person will use destiny as an excuse to commit sins and excuse themselves from accountability yet when they

experience injustice from another they demand justice and do not accept that this act of injustice was destined therefore, according to their belief, their oppressor cannot be blamed.

Finally, as this world is an abode of test and trials Allah, the Exalted, does not force guidance on anyone as this would negate the purpose of this world.

***“Or have We given them a book before it [the Quran] to which they are adhering?”***

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is

cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“Or have We given them a book before it [the Quran] to which they are adhering? Rather, they say, "Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are in their footsteps [rightly] guided." And similarly, We did not send before you any warner into a city except that its affluent said, "Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are, in their footsteps, following." [Each warner] said, "Even if I brought you better guidance than that [religion] upon which you found your fathers?" They said, "Indeed we, in that with which you were sent, are disbelievers."”***

Blind imitation of one’s forefathers is a major reason why people reject the truth. A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation.

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.

***“Or have We given them a book before it [the Quran] to which they are adhering? Rather, they say, "Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are in their footsteps [rightly] guided." And similarly, We did not send before you any warner into a city except that its affluent said, "Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are, in their footsteps, following." [Each warner] said, "Even if I brought you better guidance than that [religion] upon which you found your fathers?" They said, "Indeed we, in that with which you were sent, are disbelievers."”***

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A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

*“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”*

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five daily obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.

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Following their forefathers led them to worshipping false gods. The truth is that each worshipper of false gods only worships their own desires. Their deities are just a physical manifestation of their desires which they worship. This is obvious as a person who worships a deity in the form of an idol knows that the lifeless idol cannot command them to live their life a certain way so the worshiper themselves decides how they imagine their lifeless idol would like them to live. And this code of conduct is based on nothing but their own desires. Therefore, their worship of their desires is the root of their worship. The influential and rich are more drowned in this mentality as they are aware that accepting the truth meaning, Islam, will force them to live according to a specific code of conduct which will prevent them from acting on their misguided desires. This is why they adhere more firmly to the way of their forefathers. They also advise others to follow them as they do not wish to lose their influence and authority. This is why history as shown they were the first to reject and oppose the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them.

***“[Each warner] said, "Even if I brought you better guidance than that [religion] upon which you found your fathers?" They said, "Indeed we, in that with which you were sent, are disbelievers." So We took retribution from them; then see how was the end of the deniers.”***

This outcome must be avoided by sincerely obeying the two sources of guidance.

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

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

***“[Each warner] said, "Even if I brought you better guidance than that [religion] upon which you found your fathers?" They said, "Indeed we, in that with which you were sent, are disbelievers." So We took retribution from them; then see how was the end of the deniers.”***

This outcome must be avoided by sincerely obeying the two sources of guidance.

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.

***“[Each warner] said, "Even if I brought you better guidance than that [religion] upon which you found your fathers?" They said, "Indeed we, in that with which you were sent, are disbelievers." So We took retribution from them; then see how was the end of the deniers.”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work

and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“[Each warner] said, "Even if I brought you better guidance than that [religion] upon which you found your fathers?" They said, "Indeed we, in that with which you were sent, are disbelievers." So We took retribution from them; then see how was the end of the deniers.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be

thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“[Each warner] said, "Even if I brought you better guidance than that [religion] upon which you found your fathers?" They said, "Indeed we, in that with which you were sent, are disbelievers." So We took retribution from them; then see how was the end of the deniers.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“[Each warner] said, "Even if I brought you better guidance than that [religion] upon which you found your fathers?" They said, "Indeed we, in that with which you were sent, are disbelievers." So We took retribution from them; then see how was the end of the deniers.”***

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying],  
"Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a  
thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 26-30

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّنِي بَرَاءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ  
٢٦

إِلَّا الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيِّدِي ٢٧

وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقِبِهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ٢٨

بَلْ مَتَّعْتُ هَؤُلَاءِ وَءَابَاءَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ وَرَسُولٌ مُّبِينٌ  
٢٩

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ وَإِنَّا بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ٣٠

*“And when Abraham said to his father and his people, “Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship.*

*Except for He who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.”*

*And he made it [the testification of faith] a word remaining among his descendants that they might return [to it].*

*However, I gave enjoyment to these [people of Mecca] and their fathers  
until there came to them the truth and a clear Messenger.*

*But when the truth came to them, they said, "This is magic, and indeed we  
are, concerning it, disbelievers.""*

***“And when Abraham said to his father and his people, "Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship. Except for He who created me..."”***

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 when Abraham said to his father and his people, “Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship. Except for He who created me...””***

These verses remind muslims to remain steadfast against their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant muslim will have no weapon to defend himself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“And when Abraham said to his father and his people, “Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship. Except for He who created me...””***

This is an aspect of being sincere to Allah, the Exalted.

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*“And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion.....”*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“And when Abraham said to his father and his people, “Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship. Except for He who created me...””***

Allah, the Exalted, is Al Khaliq, which means the Creator, Al Baari which means the Maker and Al Musawwir which means the Fashioner.

The Creator is the One who brings something into existence. In reality, there is no Creator except Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One who creates without any aid from another. On other hand, an inventor only invents things through the aid of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 96:

*“While Allah created you and that which you do?”*

The Maker is the One who arranges all of the creation and prepares them for receiving the forms He has chosen for them which is linked to the next divine name mentioned earlier namely, the Fashioner.

The Creator makes things manifest. The Maker chooses their shape, appearance, and time of creation. The Fashioner fashions the creation according to His divine will.

After understanding these divine names a muslim must trust Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. If Allah, the Exalted, created and manages the entire universe He is more than capable in sorting out a person's problems. In addition, these names indicate that Allah, the Exalted, is the One who creates and chooses all things. So a muslim should not challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to nothing except disappointment. It is therefore better to submit obediently and patiently await relief knowing that Allah, the Exalted, only decrees the best for His servants even if this wisdom is not obvious to them. As a muslim is short sighted it is better to trust in the Creator whose wisdom has no limits. 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 when Abraham said to his father and his people, “Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship. Except for He who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.””***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who guides His servants to what is beneficial for them in both worlds and guides them away from anything which harms them. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verse 8:

*“And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness.”*

The muslim who understands this divine name will seek guidance in worldly and religious matters from none other than Allah, the Exalted, through the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever seeks guidance from anything else will not find lasting success.

A muslim should act on this divine name by guiding others towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and what is beneficial to them in both worldly and religious matters according to their knowledge. This will ensure they become a true believer meaning, the one who loves for others what they desire for themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

***“And when Abraham said to his father and his people, “Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship. Except for He who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.” And he made it [testification of faith] a word remaining among his descendants that they might return [to it].”***

First of all, 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. Islam not only teaches muslims to send blessings ahead of them to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds but it also teaches them to leave a lovely legacy behind from which people can benefit from. In fact, when a muslim passes away and leaves behind anything which is useful, such as an ongoing charity in the form of a water well they will be rewarded for it. This is confirmed in Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4223. So a muslim should strive to perform righteous deeds and send forward as much good as possible but they should also try leaving a good legacy behind which will benefit them after they pass away.

Unfortunately, many muslims are so concerned about their wealth and properties that they only end up leaving them behind which does not benefit them in the least. Each muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for creating a legacy for themselves as the moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly. Today is the day a muslim should truly reflect on the legacy they will leave behind. If this legacy is good and beneficial they should praise Allah, the Exalted, for granting them the strength to do so. But if it is something which will not

benefit them then they should prepare something which will so that they not only send forward good to the hereafter but also leave good behind. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. So each muslim should ask themself what is their legacy?

***“And when Abraham said to his father and his people, “Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship. Except for He who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.” And he made it [testification of faith] a word remaining among his descendants that they might return [to it].”***

There are many Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which advise mankind that whoever testifies that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted, will be saved from the fire of Hell. One such example is found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128.

The meaning of these Hadiths is that whoever dies while believing in this testimony will either enter Paradise and escape Hell or they will enter Hell to the extent of their sins and then eventually be allowed into Paradise where they will dwell forever. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7510.

It is important to note, that those who desire to enter Paradise without entering Hell first must not only declare their belief in Islam verbally but they must also fulfil its conditions and obligations. The testimony of faith is undoubtedly the key to Paradise but a key needs teeth in order to unlock a specific door. The teeth of the key to Paradise are its obligations and duties. Without them meaning, the key without its teeth, will not open the door to Paradise. This is proven through many Hadiths which indicate entry into Paradise requires one to fulfil the conditions and duties of Islam. For

example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1397, indicates that the testimony must be supported by actions in the form of the pillars of Islam, such as establishing the obligatory prayers.

The first part of the testimony namely, there is none worthy of worship save Allah, the Exalted, means that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who must be obeyed and never disobeyed. When one accepts Allah, the Exalted, as their God they must not obey anything which leads to His disobedience as Allah, the Exalted, alone is their Master and they are only His slaves. But the moment one obeys anything which leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they have corrupted their belief in His Oneness which has been indicated in chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

*“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”*

The Holy Quran has warned muslims that whoever commits sins is in reality worshipping the Devil as they have obeyed him over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 36 Yaseen, verse 60:

*“Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam, that you not worship Satan - [for] indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”*

The muslims who reject their desires, the desires of others and the commands of the Devil and instead only obey Allah, the Exalted, have truly taken Allah, the Exalted, as their God. These muslims have been granted the protection of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These muslims have practically actualised the testimony of Islam as they supported their verbal and internal claim with sincere actions according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When one acts according to his traditions they have fulfilled the second aspect of the testimony namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted. These muslims are the ones referred to in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128. It advises they will be saved from the Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted.

The person who declares Islam with the tongue and internally accepts it is undoubtedly a muslim but their true sincere belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, is diminished according to their sins.

An aspect of truly acting on the testimony is sincerely loving Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has indicated this in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. It advises that this is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is when one loves what Allah, the Exalted, loves and hates what He hates. As this was the characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2333, muslims have been commanded to follow 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...”*

It is clear from Islamic teachings that loving what Allah, the Exalted, hates and disliking what Allah, the Exalted, loves is a clear indication of a person following their own desires and obeying them over Allah, the Exalted. This attitude reduces one's belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. The following verse makes it clear that adopting this mentality is a deviation from true belief in the testimony of Islam. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 24:

*“Say, [O Muhammad], “If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.””*

The one who worships Allah, the Exalted, according to their own desires worships Him on the edge. Meaning, when they face times of ease they become pleased but when they encounter difficulties they turn away from His obedience in anger. 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 Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, informs muslims how to correctly believe and act on the testimony of faith, which prevents one being harmed by the fire of Hell in the next world. This is to first complete the obligatory duties correctly while fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes. Then one must add to this by performing voluntary righteous deeds, the best of which are the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the love of Allah, the Exalted, and causes Allah, the Exalted, to empower every organ of their body so that they only obey Him. This true and sincere obedience is the fulfilment of the testimony of faith. This is the sound heart which contains only the love of Allah, the Exalted, and is free of worldly desires and the love of the material world. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

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

It is important to note, this does not mean a muslim becomes free from committing sins but it means they sincerely repent from them whenever they are rarely committed.

To conclude, it is vital for muslims to not only declare the testimony of Islam internally and verbally but they must also show it in their actions as this is the only way to achieve true success in this world and completely escape punishment in the next world also.

***“And when Abraham said to his father and his people, "Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship. Except for He who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.” And he made it [testification of faith] a word remaining among his descendants that they might return [to it]. However, I gave enjoyment to these [people of Makkah] and their fathers...But when the truth came to them, they said, "This is magic, and indeed we are, concerning it, disbelievers.””***

These verses indicate that craving for worldly things prevents one from accepting the truth as they will fear the truth will prevent them from fulfilling their worldly desires.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When

one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true muslim.

If a muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous

craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

***“And when Abraham said to his father and his people, “Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship. Except for He who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.” And he made it [testification of faith] a word remaining among his descendants that they might return [to it]. However, I gave enjoyment to these [people of Makkah] and their fathers...But when the truth came to them, they said, “This is magic, and indeed we are, concerning it, disbelievers.””***

These verses indicate that craving for worldly things prevents one from accepting the truth as they will fear the truth will prevent them from fulfilling their worldly desires.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the

pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“And when Abraham said to his father and his people, “Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship. Except for He who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.” And he made it [testification of faith] a word remaining among his descendants that they might return [to it]. However, I gave enjoyment to these [people of Makkah] and their fathers...But when the truth came to them, they said, “This is magic, and indeed we are, concerning it, disbelievers.””***

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Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to

follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“And when Abraham said to his father and his people, “Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship. Except for He who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.” And he made it [testification of faith] a word remaining among his descendants that they might return [to it]. However, I gave enjoyment to these [people of Makkah] and their fathers...But when the truth came to them, they said, “This is magic, and indeed we are, concerning it, disbelievers.””***

These verses indicate that craving for worldly things prevents one from accepting the truth as they will fear the truth will prevent them from fulfilling their worldly desires.

Whenever one invites others towards Islam, commands good and forbids evil they will be challenging the heedless lifestyle of many others which will inspire them to resist the truth anyway they can. The major reason all the past nations rejected their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, was due to this very reason. They could not abandon their lifestyles and characteristics and in defense of them were prepared to wage war against Allah, the Exalted, and their Holy Prophet, peace be upon him. When one takes up this important duty they must be prepared to face many hardships caused by others including their own relatives. The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, are the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they encountered countless difficulties from their nations. One only needs to study the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to observe this fact. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472, that no one in creation had been persecuted in the path of Allah, the Exalted, more than him.

In cases like this one's response to the bad attitude of others should be educated, respectful and gentle. An example of this is found in chapter 19 Maryam, verses 46-47:

*"[His father] said, "Have you no desire for my gods, O Abraham? If you do not desist, I will surely stone you, so avoid me a prolonged time." [Abraham] said, "Peace [i.e., safety] will be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Indeed, He is ever gracious to me."*

Here the kind and respectful response of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, to the harsh attitude of his elder is discussed.

In most cases, a person must possess a character flaw if they claim to get along with everyone. Due to the differences within the members of society a person will never get along with everyone. They will always be one or more that disagree with their mentality, life style and advice. This diversity will lead to tension and occasionally problems. But if a person is liked by everyone then in most cases it shows they have adopted the mentality of the hypocrites by being two-faced. If the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were not loved by all how can a normal person achieve this status? This is the reason one should not believe in propaganda as the group that were mistreated the most in this way were the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023.

For example, the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, was once falsely accused of illegal relations by a shameless woman. She was enticed into slandering him by the enemy of Allah, the Exalted, Quraoon. When she accused the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, publically during a religious gathering he interrogated her. When she observed his reaction she immediately retracted her accusation and admitted the truth. As a result Allah, the Exalted, destroyed Quraoon by commanding the Earth to swallow him and his great treasury. This incident has been recorded in Imam Dhahabi's, *The Major Sins*, Pages 166-167. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 81:

*“And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home...”*

The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were slandered on many occasions but they remained steadfast on their mission until they were granted victory by Allah, the Exalted. When Allah, the Exalted, decides to complete a task like aiding the one who spreads the true word of faith the entire creation combined cannot stop Him.

Muslims must accept that they too will face hardships when spreading the word of Islam. Therefore, they must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, by remaining steadfast in the face of difficulties. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. If one desires to join them in the next world they must adopt this attitude also.

***“And when Abraham said to his father and his people, “Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship. Except for He who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.” And he made it [testification of faith] a word remaining among his descendants that they might return [to it]. However, I gave enjoyment to these [people of Makkah] and their fathers...But when the truth came to them, they said, “This is magic, and indeed we are, concerning it, disbelievers.””***

These verses indicate that craving for worldly things prevents one from accepting the truth as they will fear the truth will prevent them from fulfilling their worldly desires.

Following their forefathers led them to worshipping false gods. The truth is that each worshipper of false gods only worships their own desires. Their deities are just a physical manifestation of their desires which they worship. This is obvious as a person who worships a deity in the form of an idol knows that the lifeless idol cannot command them to live their life a certain way so the worshiper themselves decides how they imagine their lifeless idol would like them to live. And this code of conduct is based on nothing but their own desires. Therefore, their worship of their desires is the root of their worship. The influential and rich are more drowned in this mentality as they are aware that accepting the truth meaning, Islam, will force them to live according to a specific code of conduct which will prevent them from acting on their misguided desires. This is why they adhere more firmly to the way of their forefathers. They also advise others to follow them as they do not wish to lose their influence and authority. This is why history as shown they were the first to reject and oppose the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them.

***“However, I gave enjoyment to these [people of Makkah] and their fathers until there came to them the truth [Quran] and a clear Messenger [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]. But when the truth came to them, they said, "This is magic, and indeed we are, concerning it, disbelievers.””***

The non-Muslims of Mecca spent their lives with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and full-well knew he was no liar, madman or magician. As they were masters of the Arabic language they full-well knew that the Holy Quran was not the words of a man.

For example, one of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, Walid Bin Mughira, once held a meeting with the other non-Muslim leaders of Mecca during the time of the Holy Pilgrimage. The Holy Pilgrimage did exist before the coming of Islam but the correct practices of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been completely changed. He advised the other leaders that soon many people would enter Mecca because of the Holy Pilgrimage and they will come across the message of Islam so they needed to unanimously agree on what to say about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to deter people from accepting Islam. Someone advised that they should label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a soothsayer. But Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not a soothsayer as he did not possess any of their crazy characteristics therefore people would not accept this. Another advised that they should tell people the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was crazy and was possessed by evil spirits. But Walid replied that it was obvious this was not true as these signs were not apparent in him. Finally, someone advised to label the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a poet so that people would not pay attention to what he says. But again Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Quran or his speech were not poetry as the Arabs were masters of poetry. Walid advised everyone to claim that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a sorcerer whose goals were to cause separation between people and their religion and divisions within families. After agreeing to this plan they dispersed and waited for people to flood into Mecca for the Holy Pilgrimage and warned them not to pay attention to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they claimed he was a sorcerer. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 362.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was reciting truthful historical accounts and beneficial lessons even though he was unlettered and had not studied the previous divine scriptures, which the non-Muslims of Mecca full well knew, was a clear sign of his Prophethood.

This was supported by the fact that they themselves testified to his sincerity and honesty. In fact, during his childhood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always under the protection of Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the evils that were widespread during the age of ignorance: the time before Islam. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached maturity he was the finest person among his people, the best of them in character and repute, the best of neighbours, the most prudent, the most honest in speech and most trustworthy. He was completely removed from immorality and other evil characteristics. Because of this he became known

among the people of Mecca as Al Amin, the trustworthy. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, The Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 180.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spent his entire life amongst the non-Muslims of Mecca was enough of a proof of his declaration of Prophethood. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, invited the non-Muslims of Mecca to embrace Islam he used his 40 years amongst them as proof that he was speaking the truth. This evidence was undeniable even by the non-Muslims. This incident is recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4553. Only the arrogance of some prevented them from submitting to the truth. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

*"...for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"*

***“And when Abraham said to his father and his people, “Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship. Except for He who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.” And he made it [testification of faith] a word remaining among his descendants that they might return [to it]. However, I gave enjoyment to these [people of Makkah] and their fathers until there came to them the truth [Quran] and a clear Messenger [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]. But when the truth came to them, they said, “This is magic, and indeed we are, concerning it, disbelievers.””***

They should have upheld the legacy of their forefather the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, by sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance they were granted.

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

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is

the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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 when Abraham said to his father and his people, “Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship. Except for He who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.” And he made it [testification of faith] a word remaining among his descendants that they might return [to it]. However, I gave enjoyment to these [people of Makkah] and their fathers until there came to them the truth [Quran] and a clear Messenger [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]. But when the truth came to them, they said, “This is magic, and indeed we are, concerning it, disbelievers.””***

Allah, the Exalted, reminded the Arabs and, by extension, the people of the book living in Medina that even though they were the descendants of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, something they were extremely proud of, yet they would only obtain the blessings and mercy of Allah, the Exalted, when they practically followed in his footsteps meaning, when they sincerely obeyed Allah, the Exalted. An aspect of this obedience was to accept the truth of Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran as the people of the book were fully aware that all this was the truth from Allah, the Exalted, as they had been mentioned in their divine scriptures. Yet they argued over this even though they knew the truth. This has been indicated in the main verses under discussion. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

*“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons...”*

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

*“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons...”*

Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear to them and all of mankind that true nobility does not lie in one's lineage but it lies in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, this verse reminds the non-Muslim Arabs and the people of the book that as they chose to reject the clear truth of Islam they were no longer fit to carry the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and it would instead be given to those who practically followed his way namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. If the non-Muslim Arabs and the people of the book remained firm on their disobedience then they would not benefit from the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, in this world or the next.

This therefore reminds Muslims of the very important position they have been appointed to by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the ambassadors of Islam. It is extremely important for Muslims to fulfil this duty according to their potential. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on

beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many Muslims today believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A Muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A Muslim should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

In addition, this important position should remind Muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted, become angry with the Muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

## Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 31-32

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ



أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي  
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَتَّخِذَ  
بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا سَخِرِيًّا وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ



*“And they said, “Why was this Quran not sent down upon a great man from [one of] the two cities [Mecca and Taif]?”*

*Do they distribute the mercy of your Lord? It is We who have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of this world and have raised some of them above others in degrees [of rank] that they may make use of one another for service. But the mercy of your Lord is better than whatever they accumulate.”*

***“And they said, “Why was this Quran not sent down upon a great man from [one of] the two cities [Mecca and Taif]?” Do they distribute the mercy of your Lord?...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

Envy is a serious and major sin because the envier’s problem is not with another person in reality it is with Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who granted the blessing which is envied. So a person’s envy only demonstrates their displeasure with the allocation and choice of Allah, the Exalted. They believe Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake when He allocated a particular blessing to another person instead of them.

Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when the envier strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing. Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feelings and strives to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing. Even though this type is not a sin it is considered disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and praiseworthy if it is over a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first person who can be lawfully envied is the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah,

the Exalted. The second person who can be lawfully envied is the one who uses their knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

An envious muslim should strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person envied such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

***“And they said, “Why was this Quran not sent down upon a great man from [one of] the two cities [Mecca and Taif]?” Do they distribute the mercy of your Lord?...”***

Their statement was a sign of their arrogance.

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 they said, “Why was this Quran not sent down upon a great man from [one of] the two cities [Mecca and Taif]?” Do they distribute the mercy of your Lord?...”***

This was a foolish statement as they well knew the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the best of them in character, which earned him more respect than the senior members of their cities.

During his childhood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always under the protection of Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the evils that were widespread during the age of ignorance: the time before Islam. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached maturity he was the finest person among his people, the best of them in character and repute, the best of neighbours, the most prudent, the most honest in speech and most trustworthy. He was completely removed from immorality and other evil characteristics. Because of this he became known among the people of Mecca as Al Amin, the trustworthy. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 1, Page 180.

In addition, prior to the announcement of Prophethood the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, had been damaged and so the people of Mecca decided to rebuild it. When the black stone needed to be lifted into its place they fell into a serious and potentially violent dispute over who should place it. They all agreed that they would let the first person to enter the sacred area surrounding the Kaaba decide. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace

and blessings be upon him, was this person and as they all recognized him as trustworthy and reliable they were pleased to accept his advice. He suggested that the black stone be placed in the middle of a cloth and he ordered the leaders of the local tribes to each hold a corner of the cloth. They then lifted the block stone up and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took the stone and positioned it. This event has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Pages 197-198.

***“And they said, “Why was this Quran not sent down upon a great man from [one of] the two cities [Mecca and Taif]?” Do they distribute the mercy of your Lord?...”***

Their definition of great was defined by worldly standards.

Greatness and true success is not connected to worldly things, such as wealth or fame. A person may obtain some worldly success through these things but it is quite obvious if one turns the pages of history that this type of success is very temporary and it eventually becomes a burden and regret for a person. A muslim should never believe that superiority lies in these things thereby dedicating themselves to obtaining them while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Nor should they look down at others who do not possess these worldly things believing they have no value or significance as this attitude contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6071, that the people of Paradise are those who are considered insignificant by society and concluded that if they took an oath on something Allah, the Exalted, would fulfil it for them.

True honour, success and greatness in this world and the next only lies in piety. So the more one sincerely strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the greater they are even if they appear insignificant to society. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore search for true success in this and not waste their time and efforts in searching for it in worldly things otherwise they may well reach the hereafter a great loser. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

*“Say, “Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.””*

***“And they said, “Why was this Quran not sent down upon a great man from [one of] the two cities [Mecca and Taif]?” Do they distribute the mercy of your Lord?...”***

Their definition of great was defined by worldly standards.

It is important for muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient.” And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves.”*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. 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.”*

***“...It is We who have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of this world and have raised some of them above others in degrees [of rank] that they may make use of one another for service...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Creator and Allocator of provision to the entire creation which they need to preserve their physical and spiritual constitutions. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the provision of the entire creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

The one who understands this divine name will rely on Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them as He has planned for them before they were created. They will prove this reliance by striving to gain lawful provision as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, while refraining from anything which is unlawful and doubtful.

It is important to note that as people require physical provision in the form of food and drink. Similarly, the soul of a muslim requires provision also. This provision strengthens it and leads it to eternal bliss. This provision is in the form of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The foundation of all this is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Therefore, muslims should strive to gain this important provision of the soul as well as provision for their physical body. Two elements should be remembered in this respect. Do not exert unlawful and

unnecessary efforts in gaining one's guaranteed provision. And do not misuse or waste the provision one gains.

A muslim, should act on this divine name by fulfilling their duty by providing for their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. This includes providing them with both physical and spiritual provision through education. A muslim should also do the same for the needy according to their capacity without fearing poverty for themselves. They should remember the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893, which advises that Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the needs of the muslim who takes care of the needs of others.

***“...It is We who have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of this world and have raised some of them above others in degrees [of rank] that they may make use of one another for service...”***

This varied distribution allows one to play their role in society so that it runs smoothly and effectively. A factory would only run efficiently if different people did different duties e.g. labourers and management staff. Whereas, if everyone became either a labourer or part of the management staff then the factory would not run effectively. This in itself is a sign of a Wise Creator.

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who contracts and expands. It can mean that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who contracts the life and provision of someone through tests and trials. And He is the only One who can expand these things through divine blessings and relief from difficulties. In each case, Allah, the Exalted, provides His servants with what is best for them. For example, the faith of some will only remain strong if their lives are contracted for if they reached a time of expansion they would step out of bounds which would lead them to Hell. Conversely, the faith of some will only remain strong if they experience expansion in life as difficulties can cause their faith to be shaken which causes impatience and can lead them to Hell. 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.”*

Therefore, the muslim who understands this divine name will be grateful for whatever situation they are experiencing knowing it is best for them and in each case they will adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. During times of contraction they will remain patient and in times of expansion they will remain grateful. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the one who behaves in this manner will always obtain blessings in all situations.

One should act on this divine name by contracting away from all the things which displease Allah, the Exalted, and expand their efforts towards the things which please Allah, the Exalted. They should contract their own lives by minimising indulging in the excess of this material world and expand the lives of others by striving to benefit them according to their means.

***“...It is We who have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of this world and have raised some of them above others in degrees [of rank] that they may make use of one another for service...”***

This varied distribution allows one to play their role in society so that it runs smoothly and effectively. A factory would only run efficiently if different people did different duties e.g. labourers and management staff. Whereas, if everyone became either a labourer or part of the management staff then the factory would not run effectively. This in itself is a sign of a Wise Creator. Therefore, these differences were created for the benefit of the world not so one person can look down upon another.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or wealth. Even though, many muslims have erected these barriers such as social castes and sects thereby believing some are better than others Islam has clearly rejected this concept and declared that in this respect all people are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

***“...It is We who...have raised some of them above others in degrees [in worldly rank]...”***

Whenever a muslim finds themselves on a lawful path they should firstly show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings He alone granted them in the way prescribed by Islam. The other important thing is that a muslim should never look down on others believing that their path is somehow superior to the path of others especially those who are on a lawful path also. This only leads to pride which will lead one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266. Instead, they should firstly understand that they are unaware of the final outcome of their life or the lives of others. Someone on an unlawful path can easily sincerely repent and be saved before death.

Secondly, in the case of others on a lawful path a muslim should understand that each person has been granted the best path for them which differs from the best possible path of others. For example, one muslim may spend most of their time in a Mosque and another muslim may spend most of their time on lawful worldly things, such as an occupation. The first muslim is not better than the second as each person is on the best path for them. If they swapped places it would most likely lead them to destruction. For example, if they swapped the one who now spends time in a Mosque could adopt pride and thus be destroyed. So it is better for them to be involved in lawful worldly things. On the other hand, the other muslim who now dedicates most of their time to the material world could get lost in it and head towards the unlawful. So it would be better for this muslim to spend most of their time in a Mosque.

Therefore, muslims should never be jealous nor look down upon each other as each person is on the best possible path for them, as long as this path is lawful. This attitude will always lead to humility and mutual love for each other and according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2510, sincerely loving each other for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is a characteristic which leads one to Paradise. It is important to note, this discussion does not mean one should not try to improve themselves by acting on the teachings of Islam. It means they should be happy for others who are journeying down a lawful path.

***“...But the mercy of your Lord is better than whatever they accumulate.”***

Accumulating includes hoarding or misusing worldly blessings. But when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, they will obtain the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

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.

***“...But the mercy of your Lord is better than whatever they accumulate.”***

Accumulating includes hoarding or misusing worldly blessings. But when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, they will obtain the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“...But the mercy of your Lord is better than whatever they accumulate.”***

Accumulating includes hoarding or misusing worldly blessings. But when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, they will obtain the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who

strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“...But the mercy of your Lord is better than whatever they accumulate.”***

Accumulating includes hoarding or misusing worldly blessings. But when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, they will obtain the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

*“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”*

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in

respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

***“...But the mercy of your Lord is better than whatever they accumulate.”***

Accumulating includes hoarding or misusing worldly blessings. But when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, they will obtain the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace and success in both worlds. 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.

***“...But the mercy of your Lord is better than whatever they accumulate.”***

One must adopt the correct perception and understanding in order to appreciate this reality.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

***“...But the mercy of your Lord is better than whatever they accumulate.”***

One must adopt the correct perception and understanding in order to appreciate this reality.

It is important for muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to

them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“...But the mercy of your Lord is better than whatever they accumulate.”***

One must adopt the correct perception and understanding in order to appreciate this reality.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2377, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that he was not concerned over the excess of this material world and his example in this world is of a rider who takes a short rest under the shade of a tree and then leaves it behind by moving on.

In reality, each person is a traveller who stays in this world for a very limited time compared to where they came from meaning, the world of the souls and to where they are heading which is the eternal hereafter. In fact, this world in comparison is like waiting at a bus stop. In this Hadith this world has been compared to a shadow. This is because a shadow does not last long and fades away quickly without people even taking notice which is exactly how a person's days and nights pass away. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not mention a traveller's inn or a hotel as these are solid structures which indicate permanence. A fading shadow better describes this material world. This is because no matter how old a person is they always admit that their life flashed by and felt like a moment. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgment Day), as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated a rider not someone walking as the one who is walking would rest more under the shade of the tree than a rider. This further indicates the limited time people spend in this world.

Taking a rest in the shade indicates the importance of one correctly using the material world in order to obtain the provisions they need just like the rider takes the provision they need namely, rest. A muslim should therefore prepare for their immediate departure from this world by preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

This does not mean one should abandon this world as this Hadith clearly indicates one should make use of the material world in order to prepare for the hereafter. The rider takes a rest and muslims must gather the things which will benefit them in the hereafter instead of dedicating their time to unnecessary things which will leave them empty handed on Judgment Day. Chapter 89 Al Fajar, verses 23-24:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance? He will say, “Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.”*

## Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 33-35

وَلَوْلَا أَن يَكُونَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً لَّجَعَلْنَا لِمَن يَكْفُرُ  
بِالرَّحْمَنِ بُيُوتَهُمْ سُقْفًا مِّن فِضَّةٍ وَمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا  
يَظْهَرُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

وَلِبُيُوتِهِمْ أَبْوَابًا وَسُرُرًا عَلَيْهَا يَتَّكُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

وَزُخْرَفًا وَإِن كُتِلَ ذَلِكَ لَمَّا مَتَّعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا  
وَالْآخِرَةُ عِندَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

*“And if it were not that the people would become one community [of disbelievers], We would have made for those who disbelieve in the Most Merciful - for their houses - ceilings and stairways of silver upon which to mount.*

*And for their houses - doors and couches [of silver] upon which to recline.*

*And gold ornament. But all that is not but the enjoyment of worldly life. And the Hereafter with your Lord is for the righteous.”*

***“And if it were not that the people would become one community [of disbelievers], We would have made for those who disbelieve in the Most Merciful - for their houses - ceilings and stairways of silver upon which to mount. And for their houses - doors and couches [of silver] upon which to recline. And gold ornament. But all that is not but the enjoyment of worldly life. And the Hereafter with your Lord is for the righteous.”***

These verses indicate that worldly blessings in themselves are nothing special as they will not lead to real success in either this world or the next, even if people are fooled by outward appearances. One can avoid this deception when they adopt the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the

blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

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It is important for muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river

of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“And if it were not that the people would become one community [of disbelievers], We would have made for those who disbelieve in the Most Merciful - for their houses - ceilings and stairways of silver upon which to mount. And for their houses - doors and couches [of silver] upon which to recline. And gold ornament. But all that is not but the enjoyment of worldly life. And the Hereafter with your Lord is for the righteous.”***

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In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2377, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that he was not concerned over the excess of this material world and his example in this world is of a rider who takes a short rest under the shade of a tree and then leaves it behind by moving on.

In reality, each person is a traveller who stays in this world for a very limited time compared to where they came from meaning, the world of the souls and to where they are heading which is the eternal hereafter. In fact, this world in comparison is like waiting at a bus stop. In this Hadith this world has been compared to a shadow. This is because a shadow does not last long and fades away quickly without people even taking notice which is exactly how a person's days and nights pass away. The Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not mention a traveller's inn or a hotel as these are solid structures which indicate permanence. A fading shadow better describes this material world. This is because no matter how old a person is they always admit that their life flashed by and felt like a moment. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgment Day), as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated a rider not someone walking as the one who is walking would rest more under the shade of the tree than a rider. This further indicates the limited time people spend in this world.

Taking a rest in the shade indicates the importance of one correctly using the material world in order to obtain the provisions they need just like the rider takes the provision they need namely, rest. A muslim should therefore prepare for their immediate departure from this world by preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

This does not mean one should abandon this world as this Hadith clearly indicates one should make use of the material world in order to prepare for the hereafter. The rider takes a rest and muslims must gather the things

which will benefit them in the hereafter instead of dedicating their time to unnecessary things which will leave them empty handed on Judgment Day. Chapter 89 Al Fajar, verses 23-24:

*"And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance? He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life."*

***“And if it were not that the people would become one community [of disbelievers], We would have made for those who disbelieve in the Most Merciful - for their houses - ceilings and stairways of silver upon which to mount. And for their houses - doors and couches [of silver] upon which to recline. And gold ornament. But all that is not but the enjoyment of worldly life. And the Hereafter with your Lord is for the righteous.”***

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It is important for muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person

who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient.” And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves.”*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. 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 if it were not that the people would become one community [of disbelievers], We would have made for those who disbelieve in the Most Merciful - for their houses - ceilings and stairways of silver upon which to mount. And for their houses - doors and couches [of silver] upon which to recline. And gold ornament. But all that is not but the enjoyment of worldly life. And the Hereafter with your Lord is for the righteous.”***

These verses indicate that worldly blessings in themselves are nothing special as they will not lead to real success in either this world or the next, even if people are fooled by outward appearances. True peace and success in both worlds lie in using the worldly blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in the last part of these verses.

Greatness and true success is not connected to worldly things, such as wealth or fame. A person may obtain some worldly success through these things but it is quite obvious if one turns the pages of history that this type of success is very temporary and it eventually becomes a burden and regret for a person. A muslim should never believe that superiority lies in these things thereby dedicating themselves to obtaining them while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Nor should they look down at others who do not possess these worldly things believing they have no value or significance as this attitude contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6071, that the people of Paradise are those who are considered insignificant by society and concluded that if they took an oath on something Allah, the Exalted, would fulfil it for them.

True honour, success and greatness in this world and the next only lies in piety. So the more one sincerely strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the greater they are even if they appear insignificant to society. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore search for true success in this and not waste their time and efforts in searching for it in worldly things otherwise they may well reach the hereafter a great loser. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

*“Say, “Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.””*

***“And if it were not that the people would become one community [of disbelievers], We would have made for those who disbelieve in the Most Merciful - for their houses - ceilings and stairways of silver upon which to mount. And for their houses - doors and couches [of silver] upon which to recline. And gold ornament. But all that is not but the enjoyment of worldly life. And the Hereafter with your Lord is for the righteous.”***

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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.

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It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

***“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”***

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

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In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly

rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

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It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

*"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured."*

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

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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.

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.

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righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 36-39

وَمَنْ يَعِشْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ نُقِيضْ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا فَهُوَ لَهُ  
قَرِينٌ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَصُدُّونَهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ  
﴿٣٧﴾

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَنَا قَالَ يَلَيْتَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ بُعْدَ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ  
فَبِئْسَ الْقَرِينُ ﴿٣٨﴾

وَلَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ إِذْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنْكُمُ فِي الْعَذَابِ  
مُشْتَرِكُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

*“And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil, and he is to him a companion.*

*And indeed, they [i.e., the devils] avert them from the way [of guidance] while they think that they are [rightly] guided.*

*Until, when he comes to Us [on Judgement Day], he says [to his companion], "How I wish there was between me and you the distance between the east and west; and what a wretched companion."*

*And never will it benefit you that Day, when you have wronged, that you are [all] sharing in the punishment."*

***“And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil [from jinn and mankind], and he is to him a companion.”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6407, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the difference between the person who remembers Allah, the Exalted, and the one who does not is like a living person compared to a dead person.

It is important for muslims who desire to create a strong connection with Allah, the Exalted, so that they can overcome all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter successfully to remember Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible. Put simply, the more they remember Him the more they will achieve this vital goal.

This is achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The second is by remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue. But the highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This is achieved 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. This requires one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds.

Those who remain on the first two levels will receive reward depending on their intention but they are unlikely to increase the strength of their faith and piety unless they move to the third and highest level of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

***“And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil [from jinn and mankind], and he is to him a companion.”***

This means they lose the divine protection of Allah, the Exalted, as they chose not to seek it from Him through His sincere obedience.

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in

evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil [from jinn and mankind], and he is to him a companion. And indeed, they [i.e., the devils] avert them from the way [of guidance] while they think that they are [rightly] guided. Until, when he comes to Us [on Judgement Day], he says [to his companion], "How I wish there was between me and you the distance between the east and west; and what a wretched companion. And never will it benefit you that Day, when you have wronged, that you are [all] sharing in the punishment.”***

It is important to note, that the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. When one forgets Allah, the Exalted, then they will end up with companions which behave in the same manner, birds of a feather flock together. They will encourage each other to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which will lead to stress in both worlds. So in this respect this warns against bad companionships, which can be avoided through the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

Muslims should note that a major sign of true love is when one directs their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is because obedience leads to success and safety in both this world and in the hereafter. A person who does not desire safety and success for a person can never truly love them irrespective of what they claim or how they treat the other person. The same way a person becomes happy when their beloved obtains worldly success, like a job, they will also desire their beloved to obtain success in the hereafter. If a

person does not care about another obtaining safety and success especially, in the next world then they do not love them.

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

Therefore, a muslim should assess whether those in their life direct them towards Allah, the Exalted, or not. If they do then it is a clear sign of their love for them. If they do not then it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

***“And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil [from jinn and mankind], and he is to him a companion. And indeed, they [i.e., the devils] avert them from the way [of guidance] while they think that they are [rightly] guided. Until, when he comes to Us [on Judgement Day], he says [to his companion], "How I wish there was between me and you the distance between the east and west; and what a wretched companion. And never will it benefit you that Day, when you have wronged, that you are [all] sharing in the punishment.”***

It is important to note, that the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. When one forgets Allah, the Exalted, then they will end up with companions which behave in the same manner, birds of a feather flock together. They will encourage each other to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which will lead to stress in both worlds. So in this respect this warns against bad companionships, which can be avoided through the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

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.”*

***“And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil [from jinn and mankind], and he is to him a companion. And indeed, they [i.e., the devils] avert them from the way [of guidance] while they think that they are [rightly] guided. Until, when he comes to Us [on Judgement Day], he says [to his companion], "How I wish there was between me and you the distance between the east and west; and what a wretched companion. And never will it benefit you that Day, when you have wronged, that you are [all] sharing in the punishment.”***

It is important to note, that the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. When one forgets Allah, the Exalted, then they will end up with companions which behave in the same manner, birds of a feather flock together. They will encourage each other to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which will lead to stress in both worlds. So in this respect this warns against bad companionships, which can be avoided through the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who guides others to something good will receive the same reward as those who act on their advice. And those who guide others to sins will be held accountable as if they committed the sins.

It is important for muslims to be careful when advising and guiding others. A muslim should only advise others in matters of good so that they gain

reward from it and avoid advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. A person will not escape punishment on Judgment Day by simply claiming they are only inviting others towards sins even if they did not commit the sins themselves. Allah, the Exalted, will hold both the guide and the follower accountable for their actions. Muslims should therefore only advise others to do the things they would do themselves. If they dislike an action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

Because of this Islamic principle Muslims should ensure they gain the adequate knowledge before advising others as they can easily multiply their own sins if they incorrectly advise others.

In addition, this principle is an extremely easy way for Muslims to gain reward for actions they cannot perform themselves due to a lack of means, such as wealth. For example, a person who is not financially able to donate charity can encourage others to do so and this will result in them gaining the same reward as the one who gave charity.

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Therefore, these verses remind muslims to remain steadfast against their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt

them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend themselves would be defeated; an ignorant muslim will have no weapon to defend themselves when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil [from jinn and mankind], and he is to him a companion. And indeed, they [i.e., the devils] avert them from the way [of guidance] while they think that they are [rightly] guided. Until, when he comes to Us [on Judgement Day], he says [to his companion], “How I wish there was between me and you the distance between the east and west; and what a wretched companion. And never will it benefit you that Day, when you have wronged, that you are [all] sharing in the punishment.”*”**

It is important to note, that the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. When one forgets Allah, the Exalted, then they will end up with companions which behave in the same manner, birds of a feather flock together. They will encourage each other to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which will lead to stress in both worlds.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

***“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”***

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil [from jinn and mankind], and he is to him a companion. And indeed, they [i.e., the devils] avert them from the way [of guidance] while they think that they are [rightly] guided. Until, when he comes to Us [on Judgement Day], he says [to his companion], “How I wish there was between me and you the distance between the east and west; and what a wretched companion. And never will it benefit you that Day, when you have wronged, that you are [all] sharing in the punishment.”*”**

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In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they

possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil [from jinn and mankind], and he is to him a companion. And indeed, they [i.e., the devils] avert them from the way [of guidance] while they think that they are [rightly] guided. Until, when he comes to Us [on Judgement Day], he says [to his companion], “How I wish there was between me and you the distance between the east and west; and what a wretched companion. And never will it benefit you that Day, when you have wronged, that you are [all] sharing in the punishment.”*”**

It is important to note, that the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. When one forgets Allah, the Exalted, then they will end up with companions which behave in the same manner, birds of a feather flock together. They will encourage each other to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which will lead to stress in both worlds. Therefore, this outcome must be avoided by remembering Allah, the Exalted, at all times, as outlined earlier.

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 whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil [from jinn and mankind], and he is to him a companion. And indeed, they [i.e., the devils] avert them from the way [of guidance] while they think that they are [rightly] guided. Until, when he comes to Us [on Judgement Day], he says [to his companion], "How I wish there was between me and you the distance between the east and west; and what a wretched companion. And never will it benefit you that Day, when you have wronged, that you are [all] sharing in the punishment.”***

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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.

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 whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil [from jinn and mankind], and he is to him a companion. And indeed, they [i.e., the devils] avert them from the way [of guidance] while they think that they are [rightly] guided. Until, when he comes to Us [on Judgement Day], he says [to his companion], "How I wish there was between me and you the distance between the east and west; and what a wretched companion. And never will it benefit you that Day, when you have wronged, that you are [all] sharing in the punishment.”***

It is important to note, that the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. When one forgets Allah, the Exalted, then they will end up with companions which behave in the same manner, birds of a feather flock together. They will encourage each other to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which will lead to stress in both worlds.

It is important for muslims to understand that whenever they face any type of worldly failure or regrets they should remind themselves of the regrets in the hereafter some people will have, such as the one mentioned in chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

*“He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.””*

In this world one's regret will always be followed by another chance or other options which they can pursue in order to gain success once again. But the regret and failure of the hereafter is something which cannot be rectified meaning, there are no second chances in the next world. No one will have the opportunity to return to Earth in order to act differently.

Therefore, every muslim should be more concerned with the failures they may encounter in the hereafter over the failures and regrets of this world. This does not mean one should not strive to achieve lawful success in this world. It means they should always prioritise gaining success in the hereafter over gaining success in this world. This is an important mentality muslims should adopt before they reach a day where reflecting on their failures and regrets will not help them in the slightest. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil [from jinn and mankind], and he is to him a companion. And indeed, they [i.e., the devils] avert them from the way [of guidance] while they think that they are [rightly] guided. Until, when he comes to Us [on Judgement Day], he says [to his companion], “How I wish there was between me and you the distance between the east and west; and what a wretched companion. And never will it benefit you that Day, when you have wronged, that you are [all] sharing in the punishment.”***

It is important to note, that the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. When one forgets Allah, the Exalted, then they will end up with companions which behave in the same manner, birds of a feather flock together. They will encourage each other to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which will lead to stress in both worlds. The one who fails to behave in the correct way will not be aided by their excuses. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 22:

*“And Satan will say when the matter has been concluded, “Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you. But I had no authority over you except that I invited you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me; but blame yourselves...”*

This is when people on Judgment Day will try to blame the Devil for their sins in order to shift their burden of punishment to him. But this verse makes it clear that this is a futile and foolish excuse as the Devil only

inspires people to commit sins meaning, he cannot physically force someone to disobey Allah, the Exalted. Each person makes a choice to obey or disobey Allah, the Exalted, and will therefore face the consequences of their choice. Unfortunately, some do not understand this important point. They often commit sins and either blame others by declaring they were convinced to act in this way or they declare as others are committing sins openly it somehow gives them a license to act in the same way. The same way a worldly judge in a court of law will never accept these excuses neither will Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. It is important for muslims not to make culture or fashion the standards for their behaviour as this will misguide them and they will be left with no valid excuses on Judgment Day. Instead, they should adhere to the teachings of Islam which simply outlines how a person must behave in all situations. It is time muslims abandon childish excuses and sincerely obey 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, before they reach a day when their excuses will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. If Allah, the Exalted, will reject the excuses of those who blame the Devil when he is their open enemy and promised to misguide them how will Allah, the Exalted, accept any other excuse for disobeying Him?

***“And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil [from jinn and mankind], and he is to him a companion. And indeed, they [i.e., the devils] avert them from the way [of guidance] while they think that they are [rightly] guided. Until, when he comes to Us [on Judgement Day], he says [to his companion], "How I wish there was between me and you the distance between the east and west; and what a wretched companion. And never will it benefit you that Day, when you have wronged, that you are [all] sharing in the punishment.”***

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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 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verse 40

أَفَأَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ أَوْ تَهْدِي الْعُمْى وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي  
ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٤٠﴾

*“Then will you make the deaf hear or guide the blind or he who is in clear error?”*

***“Then will you make the deaf hear...”***

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier yet the strength of muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge namely, they believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

***“Then will you make the deaf hear...”***

Listening correctly to the word of Allah, the Exalted, is the only way one can correctly adhere to its teachings. It is important to understand the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is simply acknowledging a sound with one's mind even if they fail to make sense of the noise. For example, a person may hear someone shouting at them from a great distance but they will not be able to understand what they are saying. Whereas, listening involves hearing a sound and understanding it so that one's behaviour changes. For example, a person giving a specific verbal instruction to another who responds appropriately after hearing and understanding the instructions.

Muslims need to hear the word of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to understand it so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way. Unfortunately, many Muslims have failed to live up to this in respect to the Holy Quran as they are good at hearing the recitation of the Holy Quran but fail to correctly listen to it which involves understanding and acting on its teachings.

To conclude, simply hearing the word of Allah, the Exalted, is not good enough to obtain success one must strive to instead truly listen to it.

***“Then will you...guide the blind...”***

One must avoid this behaviour by using the senses correctly.

It is important for muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“Then will you...guide the blind...”***

One must avoid this behaviour by using their senses correctly.

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying],  
"Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a  
thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“Then will you...guide the blind...”***

One must avoid this behaviour by using their senses correctly.

It is important for a muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

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

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will

allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden message a muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

***“Then will you...guide the blind...”***

Ignorance leads to spiritual blindness.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“Then will you...guide the blind...”***

Ignorance leads to spiritual blindness. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“Then will you...guide...he who is in clear error?”***

It is important for Muslims especially, in this day and age to understand the difference between those who discuss certain topics which may be considered controversial in order to genuinely benefit people through a positive change and those who simply discuss these issues in order to attract the attention of others. Those who desire a positive change in society will always show respect and good character towards others especially, to those they are challenging through their words. They never result to vulgar language or actions in order to declare their point of view. They instead study and understand the subject they are debating about without misinterpreting or falsifying information in order to support their point of view. Their criticism is always constructive and their genuine and sincere intention to improve the society is shown through their behaviour and words. These are the people who Muslims should pay attention to as if they are correct it will improve society for everyone. But if their viewpoint is wrong they will accept the truth when it is made clear to them by others. But those who behave opposite to this correct attitude, whether they are found in the media or anywhere else, should simply be ignored as they do not desire to improve the lives of people. They are starved for attention and like an infant act out in order to attract some attention from others. Muslims should not circulate and pass on videos or other content which are linked to people like this as they are playing right into their hands and giving them the attention they so badly desire. Debating with these people is a complete waste of time because of their evil intention and behaviour. Muslims should instead place their efforts in other useful places which benefit them and others in both worlds.

***“Then will you...guide...he who is in clear error?”***

The Holy Quran teaches mankind that certain people are so drowned in the material world no advice will penetrate their veiled hearts. The Holy Quran describes how this group of people possesses hearts harder than rocks. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

*“Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder...”*

At this point those who desire to spread the word of Islam should separate from this type of person and instead concentrate on others. But it is important to note, even in this case a muslim should always demonstrate good character towards the sinful as they can repent at anytime. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

*“...and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace.”*

Similarly, in another verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that when a limit is reached it is best to separate and leave the stubborn and misguided people to their false beliefs. A day will undoubtedly come

when Allah, the Exalted, will inform mankind who was rightly guided and who was lost in darkness. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 55:

*“And when they hear ill speech, they turn away from it and say, “For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. Peace will be upon you; we seek not the ignorant.””*

Muslims should never get depressed and confused when their good advice does not affect others. In some cases, these people are drowned in sins to such an extent their heart becomes veiled. This veil prevents the good advice affecting them in a positive way. A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, explains how a sin causes a black spot to be etched onto the spiritual heart. The more one sins the more their spiritual heart becomes engrossed by this darkness. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

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

This is similar to another verse where Allah, the Exalted, declares that their ears, eyes and hearts have been veiled from the truth and they therefore cannot be guided to the truth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 7:

*“Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil...”*

The fault does not lie with the message of Islam but in the hearts of the misguided. Just like the fault lies in the eyes of a blind person and not the bright Sun. Unfortunately, this stubborn attitude has become a widespread problem within society. Some of these people believe in Islam yet have closed their hearts and minds to the teachings of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They refuse to accept any good advice which would benefit them in both worlds.

Those who choose to spread the word of Islam should understand that there are two types of mind-sets people can adopt. The first is when someone makes their mind up beforehand about an issue and then searches and accepts only those things which support their predetermined belief. Whereas, the correct attitude is to live with an open mind by searching and accepting strong evidence regarding different issues. The first mentality will only cause problems from a personal level right up to a national level. Unfortunately, this is how some aspects of the media work. They predetermine the information they would like to publish, find bits of weak supporting evidence and then blow it out of proportion for the world to see. Those spreading the word of Islam should avoid the first type of people and instead concentrate on inviting the second group towards the truth.

***“Then will you make the deaf hear or guide the blind or he who is in clear error?”***

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a

Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“Then will you make the deaf hear or guide the blind or he who is in clear error?”***

It is important for muslims to understand an important point in respect to advising others. It is the duty of muslims to advise others towards good and forbid evil but a muslim should not behave as if they have been put in charge as controllers over others. This attitude only leads to anger and bitterness especially, when others do not follow their advice. It is best for muslims to discharge their duty by advising others but they should avoid stressing over the outcome of their advice meaning, whether the person acts on their advice or not. If Allah, the Exalted, advised the greatest teacher and guide of mankind namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to stress over the outcome in many places of the Holy Quran how can a muslim claim or behave as if they have been put in charge of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

*“So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”*

The muslim who behaves as a controller will not only become bitter when people fail to follow their advice but it can lead them to giving up advising others which is a duty on all muslims according to their ability.

In addition, this attitude will also cause muslims to neglect themselves and their own duties as they are too busy concerning themselves with the duties of others. Therefore, muslims should remain firm in commanding good and forbidding evil but refrain from observing and bothering about the outcome of their advice.

***“Then will you make the deaf hear or guide the blind or he who is in clear error?”***

As all people have not been created the same they are bound to disagree on certain things. In matters related to religion and those which differentiate between lawful and unlawful things a muslim must remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of who challenges or disagrees with them. But in matters where the choice is between to lawful worldly options a muslim is entitled to offer their opinion to others when they are requested to. But they should not waste their time nor stress if others disagree with their opinion. When one holds onto these disagreements over time they can cause enmity to build up between people which can lead to fractured and broken relationships. This can even result in the sin of severing ties with people. So in cases like this it is important for muslims to let things go and not harbour a negative feeling towards someone who disagrees with their opinion and choice. They should instead push themself to agree to disagree and move on from the situation without any ill feelings. The one who fails to do this will find themself always arguing and possessing enmity for others as they are bound to disagree with others on certain topics and issues due to a difference in their characteristics and mentality. Understanding and acting on this advice is a branch of finding peace in this world.

## Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 41-42

فَإِمَّا نَذْهَبَنَّ بِكَ فَإِنَّا مِنْهُمْ مُنْتَقِمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

أَوْ نُرِيَنَّكَ الَّذِي وَعَدْنَاهُمْ فَإِنَّا عَلَيْهِم مُّقْتَدِرُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

*“And whether [or not] We take you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] away [in death], indeed, We will take retribution upon them.*

*Or whether [or not] We show you that which We have promised them, indeed, We are Perfect in Ability.”*

***“And whether [or not] We take you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] away [in death], indeed, We will take retribution upon them. Or whether [or not] We show you that which We have promised them, indeed, We are Perfect in Ability.”***

The enemies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, foolishly believed that if he was killed or died then their problem meaning, Islam, would fade away.

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And whether [or not] We take you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] away [in death], indeed, We will take retribution upon them. Or whether [or not] We show you that which We have promised them, indeed, We are Perfect in Ability.”***

The enemies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, foolishly believed that if he was killed or died then their problem meaning, Islam, would fade away.

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“And whether [or not] We take you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] away [in death], indeed, We will take retribution upon them. Or whether [or not] We show you that which We have promised them, indeed, We are Perfect in Ability.”***

The enemies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, foolishly believed that if he was killed or died then their problem meaning, Islam, would fade away.

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who over powers all things, who in reality is the only One who possesses power and might. Anyone else who possesses strength only does so because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. There is no atom in this world or in the next that can escape the power and authority of Allah, the Exalted.

As all power belongs to Allah, the Exalted, a muslim should therefore always remember that the strength to perform righteous deeds and refrain from sins comes from Allah, the Exalted, alone. This will remove any chance of pride creeping into their heart. An atom's worth of which is enough to take a person to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Whoever desires for their faith to become mighty must obey the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be granted strong faith which will aid

them to overcome all difficulties so that they leave this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. True obedience only lies in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. 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.”*

Truly Knowing Allah, the Exalted, is All Mighty should prevent a muslim from sinning. As they should know there is no way to escape the might of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, when a muslim engraves this divine name into their heart it prevents them from committing oppression and wronging others. They become fully aware that even if there is no person powerful enough to seek justice from them Allah, the Exalted, will certainly take them to account and punish them in both worlds. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, oppression to others may cause the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted, to hurl them into Hell on Judgment Day.

## Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 43-44

فَأَسْتَمِسِّكَ بِالَّذِي أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ<sup>ط</sup> إِنَّكَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾

وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ<sup>ط</sup> وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

*“So adhere to that which is revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]. Indeed, you are on a straight path.*

*And indeed, it [the Holy Quran] is a remembrance for you and your people, and you [all] are going to be questioned.”*

***“So adhere to that which is revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...”***

This verse indicates the importance of leading by example.

It is important for all Muslims, especially parents, to act on what they advise to others. It is obvious if one turns the pages of history that those who acted on what they preached had a much more positive effect on others compared to those who did not lead by example. The best example being the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who not only practiced what he preached but adhered to those teachings more strictly than anyone else. Only with this attitude will Muslims especially, parents have a positive impact on others. For example, if a mother warns her children not to lie as it is a sin but often lies in front of them her children are unlikely to act on her advice. A person's actions will always have more of an impact on others than their speech. It is important to note that this does not mean one needs to be perfect before advising others. It means they should sincerely strive to act on their own advice before advising others. The Holy Quran has made it clear in the following verse that Allah, the exalted, hates this behaviour. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, that the a person who commanded good but refrained from it himself and prohibited evil yet acted on it himself will be punished in severely Hell. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

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

So it is vital for all Muslims to strive to act on their advice themselves then advise others to do the same. Leading by example is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and is the best way to affect others in a positive way.

***“So adhere to that which is revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...And indeed, it [the Holy Quran] is a remembrance for you and your people, and you [all] are going to be questioned [regarding it].”***

One will only benefit from the Holy Quran in both worlds when they fulfil its rights.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their

desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“...Indeed, you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are on a straight path.”***

If one desires to walk down this straight path, which leads to success and peace in both worlds, then they must sincerely obey and follow 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 you [all] are going to be questioned.”***

One must prepare for their Final Judgement 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.

***“...and you [all] are going to be questioned.”***

One must prepare for their Final Judgement 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 you [all] are going to be questioned.”***

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.

***“So adhere to that which is revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]. Indeed, you are on a straight path. And indeed, it [the Holy Quran] is a remembrance for you and your people, and you [all] are going to be questioned [regarding it].”***

The remembrance can also be interpreted to mean a source of honour. Meaning, when one sincerely obeys and follows the two sources of guidance then they will obtain honour and superiority in both worlds.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4297, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a day would soon come when other nations would attack the muslim nation and even though they would be great in number they would be deemed insignificant by the world. Allah, the Exalted, would remove the fear of muslims from the hearts' of the other nations. This would occur because of the muslim nation's love for the material world and their hatred for death.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were small in number yet, they overcame entire nations whereas the muslims today are greater in number yet, have no social or political influence in the world. This is because the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, lived their lives according to the teachings of Islam thereby, favouring and preparing for the hereafter over enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. Whereas, most of the muslims today have adopted the opposite mind-set. It is important to understand that the root of all sins is the love of the material world. This is because any sin which is committed is done out of love and desire for it. The material world can be split into four aspects: fame, fortune, authority

and one's social life, such as their relatives and friends. It is in the excess pursuit of these things which lead to sins, such as earning unlawful wealth out of love for fortune. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that love for wealth and authority is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction two hungry wolves would cause if they were let loose on a herd of sheep. Whenever people seek the excess of these aspects of the material world it always leads to disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. When this occurs the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is removed which leads to nothing but trouble.

Even though, some muslims believe pursuing the excess things of the material world is harmless it is something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3158. He warned that he did not fear poverty for muslims. What he feared was that muslims would pursue the excess of this material world, such as excess wealth, and this would cause them to compete with each other over it and this would lead to their destruction. As warned in this Hadith this was the behaviour of the past nations.

As the material world is limited it is obvious that people would have to compete over it if they desired more than their necessities. This competition would cause them to adopt the characteristics which contradict the character of a true muslim, such as envy and enmity for others. They would stop caring for each other as they are too busy competing in gathering and hoarding the material world. And they would contradict the advice given in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6011, which advises that muslims should act like one body when any part of the body suffers from an illness the rest of the body shares in the pain. This competition would drive a

muslim to stop loving for others what they love for themselves which is a characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, as they desire to outdo their fellow muslims in worldly things. Persisting on this competition will cause a muslim to love, hate, give and withhold all for the sake of the material world instead of for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This competition is the difference between the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and many of the muslims today.

If muslims desire to regain the strength and influence Islam once had they must strive and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over striving for obtaining and hoarding the excess of this material world. This must occur from an individual level until it affects the whole nation

***“So adhere to that which is revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]. Indeed, you are on a straight path. And indeed, it [the Holy Quran] is a remembrance for you and your people, and you [all] are going to be questioned [regarding it].”***

The remembrance can also be interpreted to mean a source of honour. Meaning, when one sincerely obeys and follows the two sources of guidance then they will obtain honour and superiority in both worlds.

Even though the number of muslims have increased over time it is obvious that the strength of muslims has only decreased. Each muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith believes in the authenticity of the Holy Quran as doubting it would cause them to lose their faith. In the following verse Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to obtaining superiority and success which would remove the weakness and grief muslims are experiencing all around the world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

***“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”***

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that muslims only need to become true believers in order to achieve this superiority and success in both worlds. True belief involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the

traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and those towards people, such as loving for others what one loves for themselves which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This requires one to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Through this attitude was success and superiority granted to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And if Muslims desire to achieve it then they must return to this rightly guided attitude. As Muslims believe in the Holy Quran they should understand this simple teaching and act on it.

Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verse 45

وَسَأَلْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا أَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُونِ  
الرَّحْمَنِ إِلهًا يُعْبَدُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

*“And ask those We sent before you of Our messengers; have We made besides the Most Merciful deities to be worshipped?”*

***“And ask those We sent before you of Our messengers; have We made besides the Most Merciful deities to be worshipped?”***

This could be referring to the teachings of the past Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and the divine revelation given to them which were unaltered by people.

The scholars from the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) living in Medina were fully aware of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they had been described in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

*“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons...”*

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

*“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons...”*

It is important to note, that all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, came with the same religion, Islam – submission to Allah, the Exalted. The only thing they differed in were smaller issues but their core and fundamental teachings were one in the same. As the Holy Quran was in harmony with the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures there was no good reason why the people of the book should have rejected the Holy Quran and the one to whom it was given namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, it was more appropriate for them to accept Islam as the scholars of the people of the book possessed knowledge which allowed them to recognize the truth easily.

In addition, the fact that the Holy Quran confirmed the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures meant that when one rejected the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they were in essence rejecting their previous divine scriptures and their Holy Prophets, such as the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon them, also.

After all these signs verifying the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, many of the scholars of the people of the book still concealed and misinterpreted their divine teachings out of envy and fear of losing the social status and wealth they had obtained as leaders of their societies.

For example, in the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This Christian delegation did not accept Islam but agreed to a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the delegation left Medina two brothers, Abu Haritha and Kurz Bin Alqama, were riding near each other. The mule of Abu Haritha stumbled and Kurz in frustration rebuked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indirectly. Abu Haritha in response rebuked him. When Kurz asked about his response Abu Haritha told him that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was undoubtedly the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, they had been waiting for and who had been described in their divine scriptures. When Kurz asked him why he rejected Islam even though he knew it was the truth Abu Haritha replied that he did so because of the honor, wealth and authority their people had given them and he was afraid he would lose it all if he accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 75-76.

It is therefore vital for Muslims to avoid the excess love for wealth and social status. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a Muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe

warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a Muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned

against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true Muslim.

If a Muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated Muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This Muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not

appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 46-50

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ  
فَقَالَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

وَمَا نُزِيهِمْ مِّنْ آيَةٍ إِلَّا هِيَ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ أُخْتِهَا  
وَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهُ السَّاحِرُ الْوَدَّاعُ لَنَا رَبُّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ إِنَّنَا  
لَمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابَ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُثُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

*“And certainly did We send Moses with Our signs to Pharaoh and his establishment, and he said, “Indeed, I am the messenger of the Lord of the worlds.”*

*But when he brought them Our signs, at once they laughed at them.*

*And We showed them not a sign except that it was greater than its sister,  
and We seized them with affliction that perhaps they might return [to  
obedience].*

*And they said [to Moses], "O magician, invoke for us your Lord by what He  
has promised you. Indeed, we will be guided."*

*But when We removed from them the affliction, at once they broke their  
word."*

***“And certainly did We send Moses with Our signs to Pharaoh and his establishment, and he said, “Indeed, I am the messenger of the Lord of the worlds.””***

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and signs is for them to be sincerely obeying and followed.

In this age, the two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, are the Holy Quran and 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 Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the

tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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 certainly did We send Moses with Our signs to Pharaoh and his establishment, and he said, “Indeed, I am the messenger of the Lord of the worlds.””***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord of the Worlds as He is the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe. He has full control over every single entity from the smallest atom to the largest creation such as the divine throne. Except for a few members of the creation every atom in existence recognises and acknowledges this great fact and thus continuously praises Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 44:

*“The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them exalt Him. And there is not a thing except that it exalts [Allah] by His praise, but you do not understand their [way of] exalting...”*

No creature has the power to free themselves of His Lordship whether they believe in Him or not. His Lordship has no equivalent as it includes all of creation. It has no beginning, no end and no decline in authority or control. Allah, the Exalted, in His infinite knowledge knew the weakness of the creation in praising Him, according to His infinite status, so out of mercy He declared how to praise Him in this verse. Otherwise, how can a finite creature praise the Creator, according to His infinite status, without aid from Allah, the Exalted? This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 879.

As Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord of the universe He must be obeyed and never disobeyed. A muslim must only be obedient to others when it involves the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Acknowledging the Lordship of Allah, the Exalted, includes acknowledging one's servanthood to Him. This in itself is a clear declaration that a muslim must not chart their own course in life but they must simply adhere to the commands of their Lord, Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a muslim should never declare their servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, by declaring His Lordship through their words and then contradict their declaration through their actions. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 23-24:

*"Pharaoh said: "And who is this Lord of the Universe? Moses answered: "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and of all that is between them, if you were only to believe.""*

***“And certainly did We send Moses with Our signs to Pharaoh and his establishment, and he said, “Indeed, I am the messenger of the Lord of the worlds.” But when he brought them Our signs, at once they laughed at them.”***

Whenever one invites others towards Islam, commands good and forbids evil they will be challenging the heedless lifestyle of many others which will inspire them to resist the truth anyway they can. The major reason all the past nations rejected their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, was due to this very reason. They could not abandon their lifestyles and characteristics and in defense of them were prepared to wage war against Allah, the Exalted, and their Holy Prophet, peace be upon him. When one takes up this important duty they must be prepared to face many hardships caused by others including their own relatives. The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, are the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they encountered countless difficulties from their nations. One only needs to study the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to observe this fact. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472, that no one in creation had been persecuted in the path of Allah, the Exalted, more than him.

In cases like this one’s response to the bad attitude of others should be educated, respectful and gentle. An example of this is found in chapter 19 Maryam, verses 46-47:

*"[His father] said, "Have you no desire for my gods, O Abraham? If you do not desist, I will surely stone you, so avoid me a prolonged time." [Abraham] said, "Peace [i.e., safety] will be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Indeed, He is ever gracious to me."*

Here the kind and respectful response of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, to the harsh attitude of his elder is discussed.

In most cases, a person must possess a character flaw if they claim to get along with everyone. Due to the differences within the members of society a person will never get along with everyone. They will always be one or more that disagree with their mentality, life style and advice. This diversity will lead to tension and occasionally problems. But if a person is liked by everyone then in most cases it shows they have adopted the mentality of the hypocrites by being two-faced. If the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were not loved by all how can a normal person achieve this status? This is the reason one should not believe in propaganda as the group that were mistreated the most in this way were the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023.

For example, the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, was once falsely accused of illegal relations by a shameless woman. She was enticed into slandering him by the enemy of Allah, the Exalted, Quraon. When she accused the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, publically during a religious gathering he interrogated her. When she observed his reaction she immediately retracted her accusation and admitted the truth. As a

result Allah, the Exalted, destroyed Quraon by commanding the Earth to swallow him and his great treasury. This incident has been recorded in Imam Dhahabi's, The Major Sins, Pages 166-167. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 81:

*“And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home...”*

The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were slandered on many occasions but they remained steadfast on their mission until they were granted victory by Allah, the Exalted. When Allah, the Exalted, decides to complete a task like aiding the one who spreads the true word of faith the entire creation combined cannot stop Him.

Muslims must accept that they too will face hardships when spreading the word of Islam. Therefore, they must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, by remaining steadfast in the face of difficulties. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. If one desires to join them in the next world they must adopt this attitude also.

***“And certainly did We send Moses with Our signs to Pharaoh and his establishment, and he said, “Indeed, I am the messenger of the Lord of the worlds.” But when he brought them Our signs, at once they laughed at them.”***

The Holy Quran teaches mankind that certain people are so drowned in the material world no advice will penetrate their veiled hearts. The Holy Quran describes how this group of people possesses hearts harder than rocks. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

*“Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder...”*

At this point those who desire to spread the word of Islam should separate from this type of person and instead concentrate on others. But it is important to note, even in this case a muslim should always demonstrate good character towards the sinful as they can repent at anytime. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

*“...and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace.”*

Similarly, in another verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that when a limit is reached it is best to separate and leave the stubborn and misguided people to their false beliefs. A day will undoubtedly come when Allah, the Exalted, will inform mankind who was rightly guided and who was lost in darkness. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 55:

*“And when they hear ill speech, they turn away from it and say, "For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. Peace will be upon you; we seek not the ignorant.”*

Muslims should never get depressed and confused when their good advice does not affect others. In some cases, these people are drowned in sins to such an extent their heart becomes veiled. This veil prevents the good advice affecting them in a positive way. A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, explains how a sin causes a black spot to be etched onto the spiritual heart. The more one sins the more their spiritual heart becomes engrossed by this darkness. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

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

This is similar to another verse where Allah, the Exalted, declares that their ears, eyes and hearts have been veiled from the truth and they therefore cannot be guided to the truth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 7:

*“Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil...”*

The fault does not lie with the message of Islam but in the hearts of the misguided. Just like the fault lies in the eyes of a blind person and not the bright Sun. Unfortunately, this stubborn attitude has become a widespread problem within society. Some of these people believe in Islam yet have closed their hearts and minds to the teachings of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They refuse to accept any good advice which would benefit them in both worlds.

Those who choose to spread the word of Islam should understand that there are two types of mind-sets people can adopt. The first is when someone makes their mind up beforehand about an issue and then searches and accepts only those things which support their predetermined belief. Whereas, the correct attitude is to live with an open mind by searching and accepting strong evidence regarding different issues. The first mentality will only cause problems from a personal level right up to a national level. Unfortunately, this is how some aspects of the media work. They predetermine the information they would like to publish, find bits of weak supporting evidence and then blow it out of proportion for the world to see. Those spreading the word of Islam should avoid the first type of people and instead concentrate on inviting the second group towards the truth.

***“And certainly did We send Moses with Our signs to Pharaoh and his establishment, and he said, “Indeed, I am the messenger of the Lord of the worlds.” But when he brought them Our signs, at once they laughed at them.”***

Muslims must avoid behaving in this manner by failing to sincerely obey and follow the two sources of guidance.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the

body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“And certainly did We send Moses with Our signs to Pharaoh and his establishment, and he said, “Indeed, I am the messenger of the Lord of the worlds.” But when he brought them Our signs, at once they laughed at them.”***

Muslims must avoid behaving in this manner by failing to sincerely obey and follow the two sources of guidance.

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 certainly did We send Moses with Our signs to Pharaoh and his establishment, and he said, “Indeed, I am the messenger of the Lord of the worlds.” But when he brought them Our signs, at once they laughed [mocked] at them.”***

As the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was raised in the Pharaoh’s palace, Pharaoh and the senior members of his government were fully aware of his unparalleled integrity and honesty. In addition, as they were educated people they full-well knew that his behaviour did not match the behaviour of someone affected by magic. They were also aware that the miracles the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, demonstrated was not magic. Chapter 7 Al A’raf, verses 106-110:

*“[Pharaoh] said, “If you have come with a sign, then bring it forth, if you should be of the truthful.” So he [i.e., Musa] threw his staff, and suddenly it was a serpent, manifest. And he drew out his hand; thereupon it was white [with radiance] for the observers. Said the eminent among the people of Pharaoh, “Indeed, this is a learned magician. Who wants to expel you from your land [through magic], so what do you instruct?””*

Furthermore, if they truly believed it was magic they would not have worried about their authority and power being taken from them as the magic they were accustomed to only fools the eyes, it cannot change reality. The fact they mentioned their fear namely, losing their power and wealth, indicates that they knew what the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, demonstrated was not magic. They only accused him of being a magician in order to put others from accepting and following him. Finally, if they truly

believed the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was nothing more than a magician they could have simply executed him then and there and ended the matter. The fact they did not choose this option clearly indicates they were afraid that Allah, the Exalted, would take revenge against them if they attempted to harm His Holy Prophet, peace be upon him.

In addition, Pharaoh believed that the only way to overcome the miracles of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, and hinder his mission was to put on a public show where he would attempt to use magic to fool the people into believing real power and authority belongs to him and not the God of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him.

Just like the senior members of Pharaoh's court accused the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, of being a magician in order to put off others from accepting and following him the non-Muslims of Mecca did a similar thing to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

One of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, Walid Bin Mughira, once held a meeting with the other non-Muslim leaders of Mecca during the time of the Holy Pilgrimage. The Holy Pilgrimage did exist before the coming of Islam but the correct practices of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been completely changed. He advised the other leaders that soon many people would enter Mecca because of the Holy Pilgrimage and they will come across the message of Islam so they needed to unanimously agree on what to say about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to deter people from accepting Islam. Someone advised that they should label the Holy Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings be upon him, a soothsayer. But Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not a soothsayer as he did not possess any of their crazy characteristics therefore people would not accept this. Another advised that they should tell people the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was crazy and was possessed by evil spirits. But Walid replied that it was obvious this was not true as these signs were not apparent in him. Finally, someone advised to label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a poet so that people would not pay attention to what he says. But again Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Quran or his speech were not poetry as the Arabs were masters of poetry. Walid advised everyone to claim that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a sorcerer whose goals were to cause separation between people and their religion and divisions within families. After agreeing to this plan they dispersed and waited for people to flood into Mecca for the Holy Pilgrimage and warned them not to pay attention to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they claimed he was a sorcerer. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 362.

***“And We showed them [Pharaoh and his people] not a sign except that it was greater than its sister, and We seized them with affliction that perhaps they might return.”***

It is important for a muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

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

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden

message a muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

***“And We showed them [Pharaoh and his people] not a sign except that it was greater than its sister, and We seized them with affliction that perhaps they might return.”***

Generally speaking, 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.

***“And We showed them [Pharaoh and his people] not a sign except that it was greater than its sister, and We seized them with affliction that perhaps they might return.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be

thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And We showed them [Pharaoh and his people] not a sign except that it was greater than its sister, and We seized them with affliction that perhaps they might return. And they said [to Moses], “O magician, invoke for us your Lord by what He has promised you. Indeed, we will be guided.” But when We removed from them the affliction, at once they broke their word.”***

Muslims often increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, such as attending the Mosques for the congregational prayers or reciting more spiritual exercises in times of difficulty. But in times of ease they often relax and become lazy. But it is important to note, that generally it is more important to be more on guard and increase one's obedience during times of ease than times of difficulty. This is because one often sins more during times of ease than difficulty, such as abandoning their obligatory duties. If one reviews the different misguided people in history, such as Pharaoh and Quroon they will observe that their sins only multiplied during times of ease. Someone who is facing a difficulty where they are stuck and have no option but to patiently wait for relief is less likely to sin as they desire to be relieved of their difficulty. Whereas, a person experiencing times of ease will be in a better position to enjoy and over indulge in worldly things which often leads to sins. For example, a person facing poverty is less likely to sin as many sins require wealth. Whereas, a wealthy person is in an easier position to commit those sins, such as purchasing alcohol or drugs. Therefore, muslims should take note of this and ensure they maintain or even increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, during times of ease so that they do not fall into sins and disobedience.

In addition, the one who is obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands and refraining from His prohibitions during times of ease will

gain the support of Allah, the Exalted, during their times of difficulty which will aid them to overcome them successfully. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

*“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”*

***“And We showed them [Pharoah and his people] not a sign except that it was greater than its sister, and We seized them with affliction that perhaps they might return. And they said [to Moses], “O magician, invoke for us your Lord by what He has promised you. Indeed, we will be guided.” But when We removed from them the affliction, at once they broke their word.”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that breaking promises is an aspect of hypocrisy.

The greatest of promises a muslim has made is with Allah, the Exalted, which is to obey Him sincerely. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. All other promises made with people must also be kept unless one has a valid excuse especially, the ones a parent makes with children. Breaking promises only teaches children bad character and encourages them to believe being deceitful is an acceptable characteristic to possess. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2227, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He will be against the one who makes a promise in His name and then breaks it without a valid excuse. How can the one who has Allah, the Exalted, against them on Judgment Day possibly succeed?

Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 51-56

وَنَادَى فِرْعَوْنُ فِي قَوْمِهِ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَلَيْسَ لِي مُلْكُ  
مِصْرَ وَهَذِهِ الْأَنْهَارُ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِي أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ

٥١

أَمْ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ مَهِينٌ وَلَا يَكَادُ يُبِينُ

٥٢

فَلَوْلَا أَلْقَى عَلَيْهِ آسُورَةٌ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ أَوْ جَاءَ مَعَهُ  
الْمَلَائِكَةُ مُقْتَرِنِينَ

٥٣

فَأَسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهُ، فَأَطَاعُوهُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَسِيقِينَ

٥٤

فَلَمَّا ءَاسَفُونَا أُنْقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

٥٥



## فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ سَلَفًا وَمَثَلًا لِلْآخِرِينَ

*“And Pharaoh called out among his people; he said, “O my people, does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me, and these rivers flowing beneath me; then do you not see?*

*Or am I [not] better than this one [Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him] who is insignificant and hardly makes himself clear?*

*Then why have there not been placed upon him [Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him] bracelets of gold or come with him the angels in conjunction?”*

*So he [Pharaoh] bluffed his people, and they obeyed him. Indeed, they were [themselves] a people defiantly disobedient [of Allah].*

*And when they angered Us, We took retribution from them and drowned them all.*

*And We made them a precedent and an example for the later peoples.”*

***“And Pharaoh called out among his people; he said, “O my people, does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me, and these rivers flowing beneath me; then do you not see? Or am I [not] better than this one [Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him] who is insignificant and hardly makes himself clear? Then why have there not been placed upon him [Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him] bracelets of gold or come with him the angels in conjunction?” So he [Pharaoh] bluffed his people, and they obeyed him. Indeed, they were [themselves] a people defiantly disobedient [of Allah].”***

An aspect of faith is to believe in the unseen, such as the Angels. If they became clearly visible in this world then faith would have little value. This is why the declaration of faith will not be accepted by a person after they see the Angel of Death or when they witness Judgement Day, as the unseen has now become apparent to them. In addition, Pharaoh fooled his people into believing that right guidance was connected to worldly things such as wealth and authority.

It is important for muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient.” And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves.”*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. 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 Pharaoh called out among his people; he said, “O my people, does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me, and these rivers flowing beneath me; then do you not see? Or am I [not] better than this one [Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him] who is insignificant and hardly makes himself clear? Then why have there not been placed upon him [Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him] bracelets of gold or come with him the angels in conjunction?” So he [Pharaoh] bluffed his people, and they obeyed him. Indeed, they were [themselves] a people defiantly disobedient [of Allah].”***

An aspect of faith is to believe in the unseen, such as the Angels. If they became clearly visible in this world then faith would have little value. This is why the declaration of faith will not be accepted by a person after they see the Angel of Death or when they witness Judgement Day, as the unseen has now become apparent to them. In addition, Pharaoh fooled his people into believing that right guidance was connected to worldly things such as wealth and authority.

Greatness and true success is not connected to worldly things, such as wealth or fame. A person may obtain some worldly success through these things but it is quite obvious if one turns the pages of history that this type of success is very temporary and it eventually becomes a burden and regret for a person. A muslim should never believe that superiority lies in these things thereby dedicating themselves to obtaining them while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Nor should they look down at others who do not possess these worldly things believing they have no value or significance as this attitude contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6071, that the

people of Paradise are those who are considered insignificant by society and concluded that if they took an oath on something Allah, the Exalted, would fulfil it for them.

True honour, success and greatness in this world and the next only lies in piety. So the more one sincerely strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the greater they are even if they appear insignificant to society. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore search for true success in this and not waste their time and efforts in searching for it in worldly things otherwise they may well reach the hereafter a great loser. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

*“Say, “Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.””*

***“And Pharaoh called out among his people; he said, “O my people, does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me, and these rivers flowing beneath me; then do you not see? Or am I [not] better than this one [Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him] who is insignificant and hardly makes himself clear? Then why have there not been placed upon him [Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him] bracelets of gold or come with him the angels in conjunction?” So he [Pharaoh] bluffed his people, and they obeyed him. Indeed, they were [themselves] a people defiantly disobedient [of Allah].”***

An aspect of faith is to believe in the unseen, such as the Angels. If they became clearly visible in this world then faith would have little value. This is why the declaration of faith will not be accepted by a person after they see the Angel of Death or when they witness Judgement Day, as the unseen has now become apparent to them. In addition, Pharaoh fooled his people into believing that right guidance was connected to worldly things such as wealth and authority.

Finally, as his people desired to continue living according to their desires they favoured Pharaoh over the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, who was calling them to a specific code of conduct, which challenged their desires. This has been indicated in the last part of these verses.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact,

people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“And Pharaoh called out among his people; he said, "O my people, does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me, and these rivers flowing beneath me; then do you not see? Or am I [not] better than this one [Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him] who is insignificant and hardly makes himself clear? Then why have there not been placed upon him [Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him] bracelets of gold or come with him the angels in conjunction?" So he [Pharaoh] bluffed his people, and they obeyed him. Indeed, they were [themselves] a people defiantly disobedient [of Allah].”***

An aspect of faith is to believe in the unseen, such as the Angels. If they became clearly visible in this world then faith would have little value. This is why the declaration of faith will not be accepted by a person after they see the Angel of Death or when they witness Judgement Day, as the unseen has now become apparent to them. In addition, Pharaoh fooled his people into believing that right guidance was connected to worldly things such as wealth and authority.

Finally, as his people desired to continue living according to their desires they favoured Pharaoh over the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, who was calling them to a specific code of conduct, which challenged their desires. This has been indicated in the last part of these verses.

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires

and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and

guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“So he [Pharaoh] bluffed his people, and they obeyed him. Indeed, they were [themselves] a people defiantly disobedient [of Allah].”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who guides others to something good will receive the same reward as those who act on their advice. And those who guide others to sins will be held accountable as if they committed the sins.

It is important for muslims to be careful when advising and guiding others. A muslim should only advise others in matters of good so that they gain reward from it and avoid advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. A person will not escape punishment on Judgment Day by simply claiming they are only inviting others towards sins even if they did not commit the sins themselves. Allah, the Exalted, will hold both the guide and the follower accountable for their actions. Muslims should therefore only advise others to do the things they would do themselves. If they dislike an action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

Because of this Islamic principle muslims should ensure they gain the adequate knowledge before advising others as they can easily multiply their own sins if they incorrectly advise others.

In addition, this principle is an extremely easy way for muslims to gain reward for actions they cannot perform themselves due to a lack of means, such as wealth. For example, a person who is not financially

able to donate charity can encourage others to do so and this will result in them gaining the same reward as the one who gave charity.

***“So he [Pharaoh] bluffed his people, and they obeyed him. Indeed, they were [themselves] a people defiantly disobedient [of Allah].”***

This verse warns against bad 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.”*

***“So he [Pharaoh] bluffed his people, and they obeyed him. Indeed, they were [themselves] a people defiantly disobedient [of Allah].”***

This verse also warns against choosing the wrong role model.

If one turns the pages of history they will observe many people who achieved great worldly success and in some cases benefited mankind yet, they will also observe at least one thing which taints their achievements. But if one observes the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will observe nothing except success and countless things which benefit mankind. Even though, there are people who falsely criticise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is quite evident from his highly accurate and detailed biography which has been verified by reliable muslim and non-muslim historians that this criticism is based on nothing but falsehood. This is why muslims must put aside all role models and instead study and adopt the flawless character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is the only way to achieve real untainted success in both one's worldly and religious life. 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...”*

There is no goal greater than this in this world. In fact, this is what people irrespective of their faith strive to achieve. And Allah, the Exalted, has placed all of it in the footsteps of his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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.”*

It is simple, if a person desires worldly and religious success they should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they choose a path other than his whatever tainted success they achieve will eventually become a burden for them and it may lead to a punishment on a Great Day.

***“...Indeed, they were [themselves] a people defiantly disobedient [of Allah].”***

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.

***“...Indeed, they were [themselves] a people defiantly disobedient [of Allah]. And when they angered Us, We took retribution from them and drowned them all.”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the

corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“...Indeed, they were [themselves] a people defiantly disobedient [of Allah]. And when they angered Us, We took retribution from them and drowned them all.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be

thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“...Indeed, they were [themselves] a people defiantly disobedient [of Allah]. And when they angered Us, We took retribution from them and drowned them all.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“And when they angered Us, We took retribution from them and drowned them all. And We made them a precedent and an example for the later peoples.”***

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 57-62

﴿ وَلَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ مَثَلًا إِذَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْهُ  
يَصُدُّونَ ﴾ ٥٧

﴿ وَقَالُوا يَا إِلَهَتُنَا خَيْرٌ أَمْ هُوَ مَا ضَرَبُوهُ لَكَ إِلَّا جَدَلًا بَلْ  
هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُونَ ﴾ ٥٨

﴿ إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا عَبْدٌ أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ مَثَلًا لِبَنِي  
إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴾ ٥٩

﴿ وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ مَلَائِكَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ يَخْلُفُونَ ﴾ ٦٠

﴿ وَإِنَّهُ لَعِلْمٌ لِلسَّاعَةِ فَلَا تَمْتَرُ بِهَا وَاتَّبِعُونِ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ  
مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴾ ٦١

وَلَا يَصُدَّنَّكُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٦٢﴾

*“And when the son of Mary was presented as an example, immediately your people laughed aloud.”*

*And they said, "Are our gods better, or is he [worshipping the Prophet Isa, peace be upon him]?" They did not present it [i.e., the comparison] except for [mere] argument. But, [in fact], they are a people prone to dispute.*

*He [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] was not but a servant upon whom We bestowed favor, and We made him an example for the Children of Israel.*

*And if We willed, We could have made of you angels succeeding [you] on the earth.*

*And indeed, he [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] will be [a sign for] knowledge of the Hour, so be not in doubt of it, and follow Me. This is a straight path.*

*And never let Satan avert you. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”*

***“And when the son of Mary was presented as an example, immediately your people laughed aloud.” And they said, “Are our gods better, or is he [worshipping the Prophet Isa, peace be upon him]?” They did not present it [i.e., the comparison] except for [mere] argument. But, [in fact], they are a people prone to dispute.”***

The non-muslims of Mecca attempted to justify their polytheism by comparing it to the Christians who worshipped a human being namely, the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him. But this was foolish as they were comparing falsehood to another falsehood and something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not calling others towards. They only behaved in this manner in order to confuse others thereby preventing them from accepting Islam.

In addition, they could have also been suggesting that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired to be worshipped like the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was worshipped by the Christians. Again, a foolish notion as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never preached anything to them except to worship Allah, the Exalted, just like the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, did.

Finally, they could have been suggesting that as the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, will be greatly honoured by Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter, even though he was worshipped by the Christians, their idols will also be honoured even though they were worshipped.

It is important for muslims especially, in this day and age to understand the difference between those who discuss certain topics which may be considered controversial in order to genuinely benefit people through a positive change and those who simply discuss these issues in order to attract the attention of others. Those who desire a positive change in society will always show respect and good character towards others especially, to those they are challenging through their words. They never result to vulgar language or actions in order to declare their point of view. They instead study and understand the subject they are debating about without misinterpreting or falsifying information in order to support their point of view. Their criticism is always constructive and their genuine and sincere intention to improve the society is shown through their behaviour and words. These are the people who muslims should pay attention to as if they are correct it will improve society for everyone. But if their viewpoint is wrong they will accept the truth when it is made clear to them by others. But those who behave opposite to this correct attitude, whether they are found in the media or anywhere else, should simply be ignored as they do not desire to improve the lives of people. They are starved for attention and like an infant act out in order to attract some attention from others. Muslims should not circulate and pass on videos or other content which are linked to people like this as they are playing right into their hands and giving them the attention they so badly desire. Debating with these people is a complete waste of time because of their evil intention and behaviour. Muslims should instead place their efforts in other useful places which benefit them and others in both worlds.

***“And when the son of Mary was presented as an example, immediately your people laughed aloud.” And they said, “Are our gods better, or is he [worshipping the Prophet Isa, peace be upon him]?” They did not present it [i.e., the comparison] except for [mere] argument. But, [in fact], they are a people prone to dispute.”***

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Finally, they could have been suggesting that as the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, will be greatly honoured by Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter, even though he was worshipped by the Christians, their idols will also be honoured even though they were worshipped.

The Holy Quran teaches mankind that certain people are so drowned in the material world no advice will penetrate their veiled hearts. The Holy Quran describes how this group of people possesses hearts harder than rocks. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

*“Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder...”*

At this point those who desire to spread the word of Islam should separate from this type of person and instead concentrate on others. But it is important to note, even in this case a muslim should always demonstrate good character towards the sinful as they can repent at anytime. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

*“...and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace.”*

Similarly, in another verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that when a limit is reached it is best to separate and leave the stubborn and misguided people to their false beliefs. A day will undoubtedly come

when Allah, the Exalted, will inform mankind who was rightly guided and who was lost in darkness. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 55:

*“And when they hear ill speech, they turn away from it and say, “For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. Peace will be upon you; we seek not the ignorant.””*

Muslims should never get depressed and confused when their good advice does not affect others. In some cases, these people are drowned in sins to such an extent their heart becomes veiled. This veil prevents the good advice affecting them in a positive way. A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, explains how a sin causes a black spot to be etched onto the spiritual heart. The more one sins the more their spiritual heart becomes engrossed by this darkness. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

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

This is similar to another verse where Allah, the Exalted, declares that their ears, eyes and hearts have been veiled from the truth and they therefore cannot be guided to the truth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 7:

*“Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil...”*

The fault does not lie with the message of Islam but in the hearts of the misguided. Just like the fault lies in the eyes of a blind person and not the bright Sun. Unfortunately, this stubborn attitude has become a widespread problem within society. Some of these people believe in Islam yet have closed their hearts and minds to the teachings of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They refuse to accept any good advice which would benefit them in both worlds.

Those who choose to spread the word of Islam should understand that there are two types of mind-sets people can adopt. The first is when someone makes their mind up beforehand about an issue and then searches and accepts only those things which support their predetermined belief. Whereas, the correct attitude is to live with an open mind by searching and accepting strong evidence regarding different issues. The first mentality will only cause problems from a personal level right up to a national level. Unfortunately, this is how some aspects of the media work. They predetermine the information they would like to publish, find bits of weak supporting evidence and then blow it out of proportion for the world to see. Those spreading the word of Islam should avoid the first type of people and instead concentrate on inviting the second group towards the truth.

***“...But, [in fact], they are a people prone to dispute.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever avoids arguing even if they are right will be given a house in the middle of Paradise.

It is important to understand that the characteristic of a true muslim is not to argue or debate in order to promote themselves and their opinion. They should instead present the information in order to promote the truth. This applies to both worldly and religious matters. The one who aims to promote the truth will not argue. Only the one who is trying to promote themselves will. Contrary to what many believe winning arguments does not increase one's rank in anyway. The only time one's rank in both worlds' increases is when they avoid arguing and instead present the truth or accept it when it is presented to them. A muslim should avoid going back and forth with others when discussing things as this is a characteristic of arguing. It is this correct mentality which has been indicated in Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 125:

*“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best...”*

A muslim should understand that their duty is not to force people to accept something. Their duty is to simply present the truth as being forceful is a characteristic of arguing.

A muslim should not waste their time nor stress if others disagree with their opinion. When one holds onto these disagreements over time it can cause enmity to build up between them and others, which can lead to fractured and broken relationships. This can even lead to the sin of severing ties with people. So in cases like this it is important for muslims to let things go and not harbour negative feelings towards someone who disagrees with their opinion and choice. They should instead push themselves to agree to disagree and move on from the situation without any ill feelings. The one who fails to do this will find themselves always arguing and possessing enmity for others as they are bound to disagree with others on certain topics and issues due to the difference in their characteristics and mentality. Understanding this principle is a branch of finding peace in this world.

***“He [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] was not but a servant upon whom We bestowed favor...”***

This verse indicates the highest rank a person can reach namely, a sincere servant of Allah, the Exalted. If there was a greater rank than this Allah, the Exalted, would have referred to the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, with it. This has been supported by many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 851, where the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, referred to himself as the servant of Allah, the Exalted, before declaring his Messengership. This is a clear lesson to all muslims that if they desire ultimate success and the highest ranks in both worlds they must become true servants of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved by following in the footsteps of the greatest servant of Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Servanthood is not possible to achieve any other way. 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 Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”***

***“He [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] was not but a servant upon whom We bestowed favor...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is infinitely bountiful and bestows favours and blessings without recompense or external cause. He gives generously without being asked.

The muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to 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]...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by bestowing the blessings they have been given to others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. The one who gives to others will be given more than they could have ever imagined. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.”*

***“He [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] was not but a servant upon whom We bestowed favor, and We made him an example [role model] for the Children of Israel.”***

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is for them to be sincerely obeyed and followed. 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.

***“He [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] was not but a servant upon whom We bestowed favor, and We made him an example [role model] for the Children of Israel.”***

The main reasons for the spread of the false beliefs regarding the Holy Prophet Eesa, were his miraculous birth, the miracles which he performed and his ascension into Heaven while alive. The Holy Quran confirms the miraculous birth of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and proves that his fatherless birth was a sign of the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 47:

*“She [Maryam, may Allah be pleased with her] said, “My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me?” [The angel] said, “Such is Allāh; He creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”*

This miraculous birth does not prove that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine. It only indicates the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 59:

*“Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created him from dust; then He said to him, “Be,” and he was.”*

This verse indicates a simple but profound lesson namely, some wrongfully believe that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, is the son of God as he has no human father. But if this was the criterion for linking him to Allah, the Exalted, then the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, is more fitting for this claim as he has no human father or mother. Reflecting on this verse alone is enough to understand the truth namely, the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, is a righteous servant, Messenger and Holy Prophet of Allah, the Exalted.

The miracles of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, are also verified by the Holy Quran. It however makes it clear that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, performed these miracles with the will, permission and command of Allah, the Exalted. If the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine he would not need the will or permission of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 49:

*“And [make the Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] a messenger to the Children of Israel, [who will say], 'Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allāh. And I cure the blind [from birth] and the leper, and I give life to the dead - by permission of Allāh. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses...”*

The ascension of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, to the Heavens while alive further indicates the power of Allah, the Exalted, as He took the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, on this journey. If the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine he could have undertaken this journey with his own innate power. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 55:

*“[Mention] when Allāh said, "O Jesus, indeed I will take you and raise you to Myself and purify [i.e., free] you from those who disbelieve...”*”

The Holy Quran tells the Christians that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, contrary to their belief, was not crucified. The one whose image was seen on the cross was not the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, but someone who was made to look like him. Allah, the Exalted, had already raised the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, towards Heaven by this time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verses 156-158:

*“And for their disbelief and their saying against Mary a great slander. And [for] their saying, "Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the messenger of Allāh." And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them...Rather, Allāh raised him to Himself.”*

The incorrect Christian belief of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, being crucified meaning, killed, is strange in itself as a real divine

being is far beyond experiencing death. So in reality, their incorrect belief in his death by crucifixion negates their incorrect belief in his divinity by itself.

Finally, a divine being by nature is something which is self-sustaining meaning, they do not need someone else to sustain them. If a being is sustained by another then they cannot be divine. Both the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and his mother, Maryam, may Allah be pleased with her, were not divine beings as they required nourishment from Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they were not self-sustaining beings. In addition, no one can claim that as the Angels do not eat they can be considered Gods. In reality, they are also sustained by Allah, the Exalted, in a different way so they too are not self-sustaining. The fact that they have been created and will experience death, just like the rest of creation, is enough to negate divinity.

***“And if We willed, We could have made of you angels succeeding [you] on the earth.”***

Muslims must remember the very important position they have been appointed to by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the ambassadors of Islam. It is extremely important for muslims to fulfil this duty according to their potential. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many muslims today believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A muslim should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

In addition, this important position should remind muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted,

become angry with the muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

***“And indeed, he [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] will be [a sign for] knowledge of the Hour...”***

This refers to the time when the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, will return to Earth towards the end of time. One of his missions will be to defeat the Anti-Christ. The trial of the Anti-Christ has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4077, as the greatest trial Muslims will face during their lives on Earth. Therefore, Muslims should learn some important lessons from this future event. The first is the importance of possessing strong faith. Only those who possess weak faith will be misguided by him. Strong faith is extremely important as it is a weapon against every trial or difficulty one faces during their life. The one who possesses strong faith will always, through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, overcome every difficulty with reward and the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, as they understand the behaviour they must demonstrate in each situation. Whereas, those who possess weak faith are easily misguided and put off from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by the tests and trials they face during their life just like the people of weak faith will be misguided by the Anti-Christ. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

*“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge.<sup>1</sup> 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.”*

The best way to achieve strong faith is through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. This will allow a Muslim to understand the reason and wisdom of tests and trials. This in turn will allow them to overcome them successfully.

The other thing to learn from this great event is the importance of avoiding doubtful things. Just like a person who journeys close to a border is more likely to cross it similarly, a Muslim who is surrounded by temptations will more likely be led astray. The one who avoids places and things which tempt them towards sins will protect their faith and honour. This advice has been given in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. Muslims should therefore guard their faith by avoiding things, places and people who invite or tempt them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and ensure their dependents, such as their children do the same.

***“...the Hour, so be not in doubt of it...”***

Ignorance leads to doubts.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“...the Hour, so be not in doubt of it...”***

Ignorance leads to doubts. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“...the Hour, so be not in doubt of it, and follow Me [My commands]...”***

Doubts prevent one from preparing for the Day of Judgement, even if they believe in it. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in the main verse under discussion.

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.

***“...the Hour, so be not in doubt of it, and follow Me [My commands]...”***

Doubts prevent one from preparing for the Day of Judgement, even if they believe in it. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in the main verse under discussion. 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 follow Me [My commands]. This is a straight path.”***

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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“...and follow Me [My commands]. This is a straight path. And never let Satan avert you. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”***

These verses are connected to chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 38:

*“...And Satan had made pleasing to them their deeds and averted them from the path...”*

As mentioned in this verse the Devil fools people into committing sins and making wrong decisions by beautifying the incorrect choice for them. This occurs in situations when a person must make a choice between two or more options. It also occurs when the choice is between the lawful and unlawful and even between two lawful options. If the Devil cannot guide someone to a sin then he attempts to guide them to the inferior option, even if it is lawful, hoping it will lead to some sort of a sin, such as a person complaining about life and destiny. The Devil beautifies a choice by causing one to focus on its apparent benefit to such a degree that they lose focus on the bigger picture and the consequences of the choice. An adult then behaves like a child who makes choices without reflecting over the consequences of their actions. This is one of the main reasons why people commit sins. In reality, if one truly reflected on the punishment of sins they would never commit them.

Something which helps in situations like this is to mentally take a step back and assess the options by comparing their long-term benefits and harms. Only when the lawful benefits of something outweighs the harm should a person proceed. The other thing which helps is to deeply reflect on the consequences of the potential options. Some choices might be lawful but if one goes ahead with them it may make their life difficult in the long run. For example, sometimes people rush into marriage with someone they apparently love. They base their decision solely on their feelings instead of reflecting on other more important aspects, for example, if their potential future spouse will make a good life partner or a good parent and if they will help them in their obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Many marriages have ended in divorce because the couple did not reflect on the long term implications of a potential marriage. Many people often claim their spouse was very different before they got married but in most cases they have not changed at all. The truth is that before marriage they did not spend so much time with them so they did not observe certain characteristics which became obvious after marriage.

Some often rush into action and later have regrets as their choice caused them more trouble and in many cases the issue was not a big deal in the first place. This type of action can only be avoided when one reflects on the situation and observes the bigger picture meaning, the wider and long-term implications and consequences of taking a step forward.

One should not only assess if something is lawful or unlawful before making a decision. Even though, this is the most important thing to consider yet, it is not the only thing. As many lawful incorrect choices, which are beautified by the Devil, can lead to trouble further on in life.

To sum up, before making any choice a person must take a step back and reflect deeply over its lawfulness and its potential long-term benefits and harms under the guidance of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever acts like this will rarely make a wrong choice they later regret.

***“...and follow Me [My commands]. This is a straight path. And never let Satan avert you. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”***

The Devil tries to convince muslims to always observe those who are worse than them in behaviour in order to justify their lack of striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and improving their character and behaviour for the better. For example, a muslim who offers their obligatory prayers once in a while will observe someone who does not pray at all in order to make themselves feel better. A thief will look at a murderer and convince themselves stealing is not so bad. The examples are endless. It is very strange how these muslims so easily observe those who appear worse than them in order to justify their lack of effort in obeying Allah, the Exalted, but these same people will not observe those who are in a worse off position than them when they face difficulties. For example, the person who suffers from back pain will not observe the one who is physically disabled so that it prevents them from complaining. This attitude has specifically been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513.

In addition, if observing those who appear worse in their behaviour does not save one from punishment in a worldly court, such as a thief being pardoned by a judge because there are many murderers in the world, how can one imagine this excuse will hold up in the court of Allah, the Exalted?

Muslims should therefore avoid this trap of the Devil by observing those who appear better than them so that they are inspired to improve their character and behaviour progressively for the pleasure of Allah, the

Exalted. This is what Allah, the Exalted, demands meaning, He does not demand perfection.

***“...and follow Me [My commands]. This is a straight path. And never let Satan avert you. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”***

It is important to understand that no matter how much religious knowledge one obtains or how much worship and righteous deeds they perform they will never be safe from the attacks and traps of the Devil. This is because the Devil attacks each person according to how much knowledge they possess and how much righteous deeds they perform. For example, he will try to convince the muslim who is strict in offering their obligatory prayers not to offer them in congregation at the Mosque or by convincing them to delay their obligatory prayers beyond their starting times as he knows he will not be able to convince them to completely abandon the obligatory prayers. Whereas, in respect to the muslim who is struggling to establish their obligatory prayers he will attempt to convince them that they are too difficult to establish therefore they should only offer them when they are completely free. He tries to convince those who perform many voluntary righteous deeds not to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to improve their character so that they continue to destroy their good deeds through bad characteristics such as, lying and backing.

The Devil aims to prevent a person from a reaching a higher level if he cannot convince them to fall in rank through disobedience to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, muslims should always be on guard against his attacks and traps by persistently striving to increase in rank, improve their character and avoid acts of disobedience which is all achieved by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“...and follow Me [My commands]. This is a straight path. And never let Satan avert you. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”***

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3294, advises that whichever path the second rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, took the Devil would take a different path, meaning, out of fear of him. One of the reasons why the Devil acted in this way was because he had little influence over Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him. The Devil cannot physically force someone to commit sins. He instead encourages them to do so through whisperings. But in order for them to be effective he requires a person to possess some sort of worldly desire. Then through his whisperings he encourages the growth of this worldly desire until it drives the person to act on it thereby committing a sin. The reason the Devil had little effect on Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, was because he had removed worldly desires from his heart. His only desires were connected to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, if muslims desire to minimise the effect the Devil has on them they should remove unnecessary desires from their heart. This only occurs when one refrains from indulging in the excess and unnecessary aspects of this material world. The more they do this the more these worldly desires will leave their heart until they reach a point where they only desire to please Allah, the Exalted, in all their actions. The Devil will flee from this person as he knows he will have little effect on them. But the more one indulges in the unnecessary aspects of this material world the more worldly desires they will possess and therefore, the more influence the Devil will have over them.

Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 63-65

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ عِيسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالَ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِالْحِكْمَةِ  
وَلِأُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي تَخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا

٦٣

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

٦٤

فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ  
عَذَابٍ يَوْمِ أَلِيمٍ

٦٥

*“And when Jesus brought clear proofs, he said, “I have come to you with wisdom and to make clear to you some of that over which you differ, so fear Allah and obey me.*

*Indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path.”*

*But the denominations from among them differed [and separated], so woe to those who have wronged from the punishment of a painful Day.”*

***“And when Jesus brought clear proofs, he said, "I have come to you with wisdom..."”***

Wisdom shows one how to use their knowledge correctly so that they benefit themselves and others in both worlds. The children of Israel possessed knowledge but lacked wisdom.

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 when Jesus brought clear proofs, he said, "I have come to you...to make clear to you some of that over which you differ..."...But the denominations from among them differed [and separated], so woe to those who have wronged from the punishment of a painful Day.”***

Out of desire for leadership and wealth the scholars of the children of Israel altered, concealed and intentionally misinterpreted divine teachings. The Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was sent to correct this but the majority of those who believed in him behaved in the same manner.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who obtains religious knowledge in order to show off to scholars, argue with others or attract attention to themselves will go to Hell.

Even though, the foundation of all good in both worldly and religious matters is knowledge muslims must understand that knowledge will only benefit them when they firstly correct their intention. Meaning, they strive to obtain and act on knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted. All other reasons will only lead to a loss of reward and even punishment if a muslim fails to sincerely repent.

In reality, knowledge is like rain water which falls on different types of trees. Some trees grow by this water in order to benefit others such as a fruit tree.

Whereas, other trees grow by this water and become a nuisance to others such as a thorny tree. Even though, the rain water is the same in both cases but the outcome is very different. Similarly, religious knowledge is the same for people but if one adopts the incorrect intention then it will become a means of their destruction. Conversely, if one adopts the correct intention it will become a means of their salvation.

Muslims should therefore correct their intention in all matters as they will be judged on this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell will be a scholar who only obtained knowledge in order to show off to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

To conclude, only obtaining and acting on useful knowledge with the correct intention is true beneficial knowledge.

Whoever conceals knowledge without a valid reason will be bridled with fire on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2649. Therefore, muslims must share the useful knowledge their gain with others. It is simply foolish not to as this is one of the righteous deeds which will benefit a muslim even after they die. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 241. Those who hoarded knowledge were forgotten by history but those who shared it with others became known as the scholars and teachers of mankind.

***“And when Jesus brought clear proofs, he said, "I have come to you...to make clear to you some of that over which you differ..."...But the denominations from among them differed [and separated], so woe to those who have wronged from the punishment of a painful Day.”***

Out of desire for leadership and wealth the scholars of the children of Israel altered, concealed and intentionally misinterpreted divine teachings. The Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was sent to correct this but the majority of those who believed in him behaved in the same manner.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a muslim should firmly

believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from

Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true muslim.

If a muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

***“And when Jesus brought clear proofs, he said, "I have come to you...to make clear to you some of that over which you differ..."...But the denominations from among them differed [and separated], so woe to those who have wronged from the punishment of a painful Day.”***

Out of desire for leadership and wealth the scholars of the children of Israel altered, concealed and intentionally misinterpreted divine teachings. The Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was sent to correct this but the majority of those who believed in him behaved in the same manner.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that he did not fear poverty for the muslim nation. Instead he feared that the world would become easy to obtain and plentiful for them. This would cause them to compete for it which would lead to their destruction as this same competition destroyed the previous nations.

It is important to understand that this does not only apply to wealth. But this warning applies to all aspects of people's worldly desires which can be encompassed by the desire for fame, wealth, authority and the social aspects of one's life, such as family, friends and a career. Whenever one aims to fulfil their desires by pursuing these things, even if they are lawful, beyond their needs it will distract them from preparing for the hereafter. It will lead them to bad character such as being wasteful and extravagant and may even take them towards sins in order to obtain these things. Failing to obtain them may lead to impatience and other acts of defiance and disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious these desires have

taken control over many muslims as they would happily get up in the middle of the night in order to obtain these things such as wealth or go on a holiday but will fail to do so when advised to offer the voluntary night prayer or attend the morning obligatory prayer at the Mosque with congregation.

There is no harm in obtaining these things as long as they are lawful and required in order to fulfil a person's needs and the needs of their dependents. But when a person goes beyond this then they will become preoccupied with them at the loss of their hereafter as the more one pursues their desires the less they will strive in preparing for the hereafter. And therefore, the warning given in this Hadith will apply to them.

***“And when Jesus brought clear proofs, he said, “...fear Allāh...””***

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and

slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“And when Jesus brought clear proofs, he said, “...so fear Allāh and obey me.””***

True obedience involves sincerity. 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 when Jesus brought clear proofs, he said, “...Indeed, Allāh is my Lord and your Lord...””***

These verses are connected to chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

*“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], “Am I not your Lord?” They said, “Yes, we have testified.” [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, “Indeed, we were of this unaware.””*

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere 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.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an

indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a muslim has a choice between pleasing Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments, enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person's heart indicates that it is a duty on muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a muslim. Certainty of faith allows a muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“And when Jesus brought clear proofs, he said, “...Indeed, Allāh is my Lord and your Lord so worship Him. This is a straight path.””***

True worship involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*“And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion.....”*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never

burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“...so woe to those who have wronged from the punishment of a painful Day.”***

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.

***“...so woe to those who have wronged from the punishment of a painful Day.”***

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.

***“...so woe to those who have wronged from the punishment of a painful Day.”***

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.

***“...so woe to those who have wronged from the punishment of a painful Day.”***

The Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation on the Day of Judgment. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864.

This will cause people to sweat according to the deeds they performed during their lives on Earth. Some people's sweat will reach up to their ankles, some their knees and for others it will reach their mouths.

One only needs to ponder over the times they were subjected to intense summer weather and how the heat affected their attitude and behaviour. Through this one can imagine how difficult the situation on Judgment Day will be when the Sun is brought so close to them. This shows that those who strive hard and exert sincere efforts in the obedience 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, will find relaxation on Judgment Day. But those who were lazy and relaxed during their lives on Earth will be subjected to great stress on Judgment Day. Simply put, the one who strives here will relax there but the one who relaxes here will strive there in difficulty.

The same way people strive hard in this material world so that they obtain a comfortable life and even a comfortable retirement, even though reaching this retirement age is not guaranteed, muslims should strive

even harder in this world by obeying Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life so that they can obtain peace and comfort on a day that is guaranteed to occur. It is a sign of great ignorance to strive for a day one may never reach namely, the day of retirement, and not strive for a day they are guaranteed to reach and experience namely, Judgment Day.

***“...so woe to those who have wronged from the punishment of a painful Day.”***

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.”*

***“...so woe to those who have wronged from the punishment of a painful Day.”***

People will be commanded to cross the Bridge which will be placed over Hell on the Day of Judgment. This has been discussed extensively in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6573. It warns that extremely large hooks will be on the Bridge which will affect people according to their deeds. Some will be flung into Hell by them, some will be subjected to great torture before they cross the Bridge, others will only face minimal injury from them and finally the righteous will not be harmed by them. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 455, warns that the Bridge is narrower than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword.

The important thing to learn from this is that each person will cross the Bridge according to their deeds. So it is important for Muslims not to neglect any duties if they desire to cross the Bridge safely. They must fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. These include duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. One should not neglect this and simply hope they will magically cross the Bridge unaffected.

In addition, the ease at which a person will cross this Bridge will be a mirror of how much they remained steadfast on the straight path of Islam in this world. This straight path is the path 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...”*

Anyone who abandons this path will not successfully cross this Bridge. Simply put, the more one remains steadfast on the straight path in this world the easier they will cross the Bridge over Hell on Judgment Day. The straight path has been made clear in this world so muslims are left with no excuses from following it thereby ensuring they safely cross the Bridge on Judgment Day.

***“...so woe to those who have wronged from the punishment of a painful Day.”***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of

righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 66-73

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا  
يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

الْأَخِلَّاءِ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ  
﴿٦٧﴾

يَعْبَادِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

أَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ أَنْتُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ تُحْبَرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِصِحَافٍ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ وَفِيهَا مَا  
تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ وَأَنْتُمْ فِيهَا  
خَالِدُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

﴿٧٢﴾ وَتِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

﴿٧٣﴾ لَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ مِّنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ

*"Are they waiting except for the Hour to come upon them suddenly while they perceive not?"*

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

*[To whom Allah will say], "O My servants, no fear will there be concerning you this Day, nor will you grieve.*

*who believed in Our signs and were Muslims.*

*Enter Paradise, you and your kinds, delighted."*

*Circulated among them will be plates and vessels of gold. And therein is whatever the souls desire and [what] delights the eyes, and you will abide therein eternally.*

*And that is Paradise which you are made to inherit for what you used to do.*

*For you therein is much fruit from which you will eat."*

***“Are they waiting except for the Hour to come upon them suddenly while they perceive not?”***

In reality, the Hour begins when one dies as they can no longer perform any righteous deeds, such as sincere repentance.

It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of the material world. Unfortunately, muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared.

It is important for muslims to understand that no matter how long they live life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A muslim only fails preparing for the hereafter correctly because of their pursuit of the excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities.

A muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“Are they waiting except for the Hour to come upon them suddenly while they perceive not?”***

In reality, the Hour begins when one dies as they can no longer perform any righteous deeds, such as sincere repentance.

When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing. Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim they stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that they stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, muslims do not treat it like one. Instead,

they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.

***“Are they waiting except for the Hour to come upon them suddenly while they perceive not?”***

In reality, the Hour begins when one dies as they can no longer perform any righteous deeds, such as sincere repentance.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the

Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

*“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.” But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”*

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

***“Are they waiting except for the Hour to come upon them suddenly while they perceive not?”***

In reality, the Hour begins when one dies as they can no longer perform any righteous deeds, such as sincere repentance. Ignorance prevents one from understanding this truth.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“Are they waiting except for the Hour to come upon them suddenly while they perceive not?”***

In reality, the Hour begins when one dies as they can no longer perform any righteous deeds, such as sincere repentance. Ignorance prevents one from understanding this truth. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“Are they waiting except for the Hour to come upon them suddenly while they perceive not?”***

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.

***“Are they waiting except for the Hour to come upon them suddenly while they perceive not?”***

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.

***“Are they waiting except for the Hour to come upon them suddenly while they perceive not?”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that on Judgment Day the Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation. This will cause people to sweat according to the deeds they performed during their lives on Earth. Some people's sweat will reach up to their ankles, some their knees and for others it will reach their mouths.

One only needs to ponder over the times they were subjected to intense summer weather and how the heat affected their attitude and behaviour. Through this one can imagine how difficult the situation on Judgment Day will be when the Sun is brought so close to them. This shows that those who strive hard and exert sincere efforts in the obedience 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, will find relaxation on Judgment Day. But those who were lazy and relaxed during their lives on Earth will be subjected to great stress on Judgment Day. Simply put, the one who strives here will relax there but the one who relaxes here will strive there in difficulty.

The same way people strive hard in this material world so that they obtain a comfortable life and even a comfortable retirement even though reaching this retirement age is not guaranteed Muslims should strive even harder in this world by obeying Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life so that they can obtain peace and comfort on a day that is guaranteed to occur. It is a sign of great ignorance to strive for a day one

may never reach namely, the day of retirement, and not strive for a day they are guaranteed to reach and experience namely, Judgment Day.

***“Are they waiting except for the Hour to come upon them suddenly while they perceive not?”***

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.”*

***“Are they waiting except for the Hour to come upon them suddenly while they perceive not?”***

People will be commanded to cross the Bridge which will be placed over Hell on the Day of Judgment. This has been discussed extensively in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6573. It warns that extremely large hooks will be on the Bridge which will affect people according to their deeds. Some will be flung into Hell by them, some will be subjected to great torture before they cross the Bridge, others will only face minimal injury from them and finally the righteous will not be harmed by them. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 455, warns that the Bridge is narrower than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword.

The important thing to learn from this is that each person will cross the Bridge according to their deeds. So it is important for Muslims not to neglect any duties if they desire to cross the Bridge safely. They must fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. These include duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. One should not neglect this and simply hope they will magically cross the Bridge unaffected.

In addition, the ease at which a person will cross this Bridge will be a mirror of how much they remained steadfast on the straight path of Islam in this world. This straight path is the path 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...”*

Anyone who abandons this path will not successfully cross this Bridge. Simply put, the more one remains steadfast on the straight path in this world the easier they will cross the Bridge over Hell on Judgment Day. The straight path has been made clear in this world so muslims are left with no excuses from following it thereby ensuring they safely cross the Bridge on Judgment Day.

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

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.”*

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

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person who imitates a people is counted as one of them.

All muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly warns that a muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done 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.

But those who verbally declare their love for the righteous and fail to imitate them and instead imitate the characteristics found in hypocrites and the sinful will be considered and judged as one of them. This does not mean they will lose their faith but it means they will be judged as disobedient muslims. How can a disobedient muslim be counted as an obedient muslim and end up with the righteous? This is only wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 20:

*“Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise.  
The companions of Paradise - they are the attainers [of success].”*

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

Muslims should note that a major sign of true love is when one directs their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is because obedience leads to success and safety in both this world and in the hereafter. A person who does not desire safety and success for a person can never truly love them irrespective of what they claim or how they treat the other person. The same way a person becomes happy when their beloved obtains worldly success, like a job, they will also desire their beloved to obtain success in the hereafter. If a person does not care about another obtaining safety and success especially, in the next world then they do not love them.

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

Therefore, a muslim should assess whether those in their life direct them towards Allah, the Exalted, or not. If they do then it is a clear sign of their

love for them. If they do not then it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

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

There are countless examples in the world of how a person inspired their friend to take the wrong path in life which caused them serious trouble, such as prison. One should not only be cautious of people who possess bad characteristics as they will influence their friends in a negative way which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. But a muslim should also be cautious over the people who seem to possess genuine love for them especially those who do not possess real knowledge. This is because the one who does not possess real knowledge will sometimes advise their loved ones incorrectly believing they have fulfilled and shown their love to their companion. For example, a wife may advise her tired husband to offer his obligatory prayer at home instead of at the Mosque with congregation. Even though according to some scholars it is permissible to offer one's obligatory prayer at home yet, this advice will only take one away from one of the greatest traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn will only take them further away from Allah, the Exalted. This wife may believe she has behaved in a loving way even though she has not. This is why gaining useful knowledge is extremely important and a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. This is because some things may seem difficult outwardly yet many blessings are contained within them. And many things may seem easy and even lawful yet they only take one away from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a muslim should be cautious and remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and not get fooled by the advice a loved one gives. They should not assume the advice will benefit them just because it comes from a beloved companion.

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

This verse is connected to chapter 80 Abasa, verses 34-37:

*“On the Day a man will flee from his brother. And his mother and his father. And his wife and his children. For every man, that Day, will be a matter adequate for him.”*

This is when each person will flee from their relatives on Judgment Day out of concern for their own wellbeing. It is important for muslims to understand that Islam does not advise them to abandon their relatives as upholding the ties of kinship is an extremely important aspect of Islam. But it encourages them to put everyone in their rightful place within their life. This means that they should fulfil the rights of others without going overboard meaning, without compromising on the duties set by Allah, the Exalted, and following the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Unfortunately, some go too far and abandon these more important duties out of misplaced love and loyalty to their relatives. Some even strive to obtain unlawful provision and commit sins for the sake of pleasing their relatives. This great event clearly shows the downside of doing this. A muslim should always support others especially, their relatives in what is good but never support them in bad things irrespective of how close their bond with them maybe as there is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

In addition, this great event will occur between the people who, in most cases, share a deeper connection than a person does with their friends. So if this is the outcome of relatives on Judgment Day can one imagine the outcome of friends? Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 28:

*“Oh, woe to me! I wish I had not taken that one as a friend.”*

The only way people can truly benefit each other in this world or in the next is when they prioritise the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, over all else and aid each other in this ultimate goal. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

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

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified

sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous. [To whom Allāh will say], “O My servants, no fear will there be concerning you this Day, nor will you grieve.””***

Adopting servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, leads to this outcome. True servanthood involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*“And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion.....”*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to

fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous. [To whom Allāh will say], “O My servants, no fear will there be concerning you this Day, nor will you grieve. [You] who believed in Our signs...””***

True belief involves sincerely obeying and following the two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted.

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

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

***“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous. [To whom Allāh will say], "O My servants, no fear will there be concerning you this Day, nor will you grieve. [You] who...were Muslims.””***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only

use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous. [To whom Allāh will say], "O My servants, no fear will there be concerning you this Day, nor will you grieve. who believed in Our verses and were Muslims. Enter Paradise..."”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous. [To whom Allāh will say], “O My servants, no fear will there be concerning you this Day, nor will you grieve. who believed in Our verses and were Muslims. Enter Paradise, you and your kinds, delighted.””***

Every muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they barely know him as they are too busy to study his life, character and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

***“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous. [To whom Allāh will say], “O My servants...Enter Paradise, you and your kinds, delighted.” Circulated among them will be plates and vessels of gold. And therein is whatever the souls desire and [what] delights the eyes, and you will abide therein eternally. And that is Paradise which you are made to inherit for what you used to do.”***

A muslim must remember that the blessings they have been granted in this world by Allah, the Exalted, are not a gift but a loan. A gift indicates ownership whereas a loan means the blessing must be returned to its true Owner namely, Allah, the Exalted. The only way to return the blessings of this material world, which have been given as a loan to people, is by using them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated at the end of these verses. This is in fact true gratitude and leads to increase in blessings in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

*“...If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”*

The worldly blessings which have been granted to people as a loan must return to its true Owner namely, Allah, the Exalted, willingly or forcefully. If it is returned willingly then they will be blessed with much reward but if it is returned forcefully, such as through their death, then these blessings will become a burden for them in the hereafter.

On the other hand, a muslim will inherit Paradise meaning, they will be given ownership of it as a gift. This is the reason why muslims will be free to do whatever they please in Paradise as they will be granted its ownership.

It is vital for muslims to understand the difference between a gift/ownership and a loan so that they are encouraged to use the blessings in this material world in a correct way.

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.

***“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous. [To whom Allāh will say], “O My servants...Enter Paradise, you and your kinds, delighted.” Circulated among them will be plates and vessels of gold. And therein is whatever the souls desire and [what] delights the eyes, and you will abide therein eternally. And that is Paradise which you are made to inherit for what you used to do.”***

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It is vital for muslims to understand the difference between a gift/ownership and a loan so that they are encouraged to use the blessings in this material world in a correct way.

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.

***“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous. [To whom Allāh will say], “O My servants...Enter Paradise, you and your kinds, delighted.” Circulated among them will be plates and vessels of gold. And therein is whatever the souls desire and [what] delights the eyes, and you will abide therein eternally. And that is Paradise which you are made to inherit for what you used to do. For you therein is much fruit from which you will eat.”***

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom’s worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be

upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 74-78

٧٤ إِنَّ الْمَجْرِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ

٧٥ لَا يُفْتَرُ عَنْهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ

٧٦ وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا هُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ

٧٧ وَنَادَوْا يَمَلِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ مَكِثُونَ

٧٨ لَقَدْ جِئْنَاكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كَرِهُونَ

*"Indeed, the criminals will be in the punishment of Hell, abiding eternally.  
It [Hellfire] will not be allowed to subside for them, and they, therein, are in  
despair.*

*And We did not wrong them, but it was they who were the wrongdoers.*

*And they will call, "O Mālik, let your Lord put an end to us!" He will say,  
"Indeed, you will remain."*

*We had certainly brought you the truth, but most of you, to the truth, were averse.”*

***“Indeed, the criminals will be in the punishment of Hell...And We did not wrong them, but it was they who were the wrongdoers...We had certainly brought you the truth, but most of you, to the truth, were averse.”***

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.

***“Indeed, the criminals will be in the punishment of Hell, abiding eternally. It [Hellfire] will not be allowed to subside for them, and they, therein, are in despair. And We did not wrong them, but it was they who were the wrongdoers. And they will call, "O Mālik, let your Lord put an end to us!" He will say, "Indeed, you will remain."”***

It is important for muslims to understand that whenever they face any type of worldly failure or regrets they should remind themselves of the regrets in the hereafter some people will have, such as the one mentioned in chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

*“He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.””*

In this world one's regret will always be followed by another chance or other options which they can pursue in order to gain success once again. But the regret and failure of the hereafter is something which cannot be rectified meaning, there are no second chances in the next world. No one will have the opportunity to return to Earth in order to act differently.

Therefore, every muslim should be more concerned with the failures they may encounter in the hereafter over the failures and regrets of this world. This does not mean one should not strive to achieve lawful success in this world. It means they should always prioritise gaining success in the hereafter over gaining success in this world. This is an important mentality

muslims should adopt before they reach a day where reflecting on their failures and regrets will not help them in the slightest. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“Indeed, the criminals will be in the punishment of Hell, abiding eternally. It [Hellfire] will not be allowed to subside for them, and they, therein, are in despair. And We did not wrong them, but it was they who were the wrongdoers. And they will call, "O Mālik, let your Lord put an end to us!" He will say, "Indeed, you will remain." We had certainly brought you the truth, but most of you, to the truth, were averse.”***

The truth being the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must avoid this outcome by sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

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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:

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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.

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The truth being the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must avoid this outcome by sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

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.

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The truth being the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must avoid this outcome by sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the

pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

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The truth being the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must avoid this outcome by sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to

follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

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The truth being the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must avoid this outcome by sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the

obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

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The truth being the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must avoid this outcome by sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a muslim is in danger of dying as a non-muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a

muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

*“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”*

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

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The truth being the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must avoid this outcome by sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the

hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain

fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

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The truth being the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must avoid this outcome by sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they

abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

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The truth being the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must avoid this outcome by sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only

encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35  
Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

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The truth being the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must avoid this outcome by sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the

outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“Indeed, the criminals will be in the punishment of Hell, abiding eternally. It [Hellfire] will not be allowed to subside for them, and they, therein, are in despair. And We did not wrong them, but it was they who were the wrongdoers. And they will call, "O Mālik, let your Lord put an end to us!" He will say, "Indeed, you will remain." We had certainly brought you the truth, but most of you, to the truth, were averse.”***

The truth being the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must avoid this outcome by sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people

after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

## Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 79-80

﴿٧٩﴾ أَمْ أَبْرَمُوا أَمْرًا فَإِنَّا مُبْرِمُونَ

أَمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّا لَا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَرُسُلْنَا لَدَيْهِمْ  
يَكْتُبُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

*“Or have they devised [some] affair? But indeed, We are devising [a plan].*

*Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private conversations? Yes, [We do], and Our messengers [i.e., angels] are with them recording.”*

***“Or have they devised [some] affair? But indeed, We are devising [a plan].”***

Generally speaking, Muslims should understand that making long term worldly plans is not the wisest decision as these things very rarely work out as planned. One only needs to reflect on their own life and their own long term plans to recognize this truth. It is always best to plan on a short term basis as this is more achievable and does not result in such emotional or financial difficulties when things do not work out as planned. On the other hand, failure in long term plans will lead to more serious emotional and financial difficulties.

In addition, long term plans always causes one's mind to focus on this material world which distracts them from preparing for the hereafter. This attitude will only lead to difficulties in both worlds. But when one makes short term worldly plans it does not distract them from the bigger picture meaning, preparing for the hereafter.

A muslim must understand that they can plan as much as they want but ultimately only what Allah, the Exalted, has planned and decided will occur. So it is best to minimise this as much as possible and instead focus on fulfilling one's necessities and responsibilities in this world and preparing for their journey to the hereafter. This is what the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. He advised muslims to live in this material world as a stranger or traveller. Allah, the Exalted, will bless this behaviour so that the muslim finds peace and happiness in both worlds.

***“Or have they devised [some] affair? But indeed, We are devising [a plan].”***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, there are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But there are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

*“Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”*

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He

deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

***“Or have they devised [some] affair? But indeed, We are devising [a plan]. Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private conversations? Yes, [We do]...”***

These verses refer to the many meetings the leaders of the non-muslims of Mecca held planning against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

For example, one of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, Walid Bin Mughira, once held a meeting with the other non-Muslim leaders of Mecca during the time of the Holy Pilgrimage. The Holy Pilgrimage did exist before the coming of Islam but the correct practices of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been completely changed. He advised the other leaders that soon many people would enter Mecca because of the Holy Pilgrimage and they will come across the message of Islam so they needed to unanimously agree on what to say about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to deter people from accepting Islam. Someone advised that they should label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a soothsayer. But Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not a soothsayer as he did not possess any of their crazy characteristics therefore people would not accept this. Another advised that they should tell people the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was crazy and was possessed by evil spirits. But Walid replied that it was obvious this was not true as these signs were not apparent in him. Finally, someone advised to label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a poet so that people would not pay attention to what he says. But again Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Quran or his speech were not poetry as the Arabs

were masters of poetry. Walid advised everyone to claim that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a sorcerer whose goals were to cause separation between people and their religion and divisions within families. After agreeing to this plan they dispersed and waited for people to flood into Mecca for the Holy Pilgrimage and warned them not to pay attention to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they claimed he was a sorcerer. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 362.

Another example is found at the time of the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to Medina. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, began to migrate to Medina the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca understood that it was only a matter of time when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, also migrates to Medina. So they held a meeting in Dar Al Nadwa, which is located in Mecca close to the house of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba. Even the Devil disguised as an old man joined their meeting. Members of this meeting offered their opinions on what to do with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to crush his mission but the Devil refuted them until the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Jahl, suggested his opinion. He advised to assassinate him with a group of people belonging to different tribes. This would prevent the tribe of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, waging war against them all in retaliation and they would simply pay his tribe off in order to end the affair. The Devil and all the other members of this meeting agreed with this evil plan. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 152-153.

One should never plot to do an evil thing as it will always, one way or another, backfire on them. Even if these consequences are delayed to the next world they will face them eventually. For example, the brothers of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, desired to harm him as they desired the love, respect and affection of their father the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him. But it is clear that their scheming only put them further away from their desire. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 18:

*“And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, “Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting...”*

The more one plots evil the more Allah, the Exalted, will put them further from their goal. Even if they outwardly achieve their desire Allah, the Exalted, will cause the very thing they desired to become a curse for them in both worlds unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then do they await except the way [i.e., fate] of the former peoples?...”*

***“Or have they devised [some] affair? But indeed, We are devising [a plan]. Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private conversations? Yes, [We do]...”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private conversations? Yes, [We do]...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private conversations? Yes, [We do], and Our messengers [i.e., angels] are with them recording.”***

These verses are connected to chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

*“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”*

In this verse Allah, the exalted, explains how people should conduct themselves when conversing with others so that they derive benefit for themselves and others. The first is that when muslims gather they should discuss how to benefit others which encompasses charity in the form of wealth and physical aid. If a muslim is not in a position to help a needy person then this is an excellent way of gaining reward equal to actually helping them. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6800, advises that the one who inspires someone else towards good will be rewarded as if they performed the good action themselves. If one cannot aid someone in difficulty or inspire another to fulfill this task they can at least encourage others to supplicate for the one in need. Supplication for an absent person causes the Angels to pray for the supplicator. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534. This mentality can inspire the group to visit the needy person which provides them with emotional support. This has a powerful psychological impact and provides them with a new mode of strength when dealing with their hardship. The

important thing to note is that when one mentions the situation of a needy person their intention must be to aid them in their hour of need. It should never be for the sake of passing time and making them a target of ridicule.

The second way to gain blessings is when one converses about anything lawful that will provide benefit to someone in this world or the next. This aspect includes advising others to do good and refrain from evil in every aspect of their life.

The third aspect mentioned in this verse involves conversing with others with a constructive mindset which brings people together in a positive way instead of possessing a destructive mindset which causes divisions within society. If a person cannot bring people together in a loving way then the minimum they can do is not cause divisions amongst them. Even this is recorded as a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2518.

In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, advises that reconciling between two opposing muslims for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is superior to voluntary prayer and fasting. Every good thing found within society was the outcome of this pious attitude such as the construction of schools, hospitals and Mosques.

But it is important to note, that a muslim will only obtain the great reward mentioned in this verse when they perform the righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Each person will be rewarded based on their intention not just their physical action. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The insincere muslim will find that on Judgment Day they will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

***“Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private conversations? Yes, [We do], and Our messengers [i.e., angels] are with them recording.”***

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.

Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 81-82

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَبِيدِ ۝٨١

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

٨٢

*“Say, “If the Most Merciful had a son, then I would be the first of [his] worshippers.”*

*Exalted is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe.”*

***“Say, “If the Most Merciful had a son, then I would be the first of [his] worshippers.” Exalted is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe.”***

The main reasons for the spread of the false beliefs regarding the Holy Prophet Eesa, were his miraculous birth, the miracles which he performed and his ascension into Heaven while alive. The Holy Quran confirms the miraculous birth of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and proves that his fatherless birth was a sign of the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 47:

*“She [Maryam, may Allah be pleased with her] said, “My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me?” [The angel] said, “Such is Allāh; He creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”*

This miraculous birth does not prove that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine. It only indicates the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 59:

*“Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created him from dust; then He said to him, “Be,” and he was.”*

This verse indicates a simple but profound lesson namely, some wrongfully believe that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, is the son of God as he has no human father. But if this was the criterion for linking him to Allah, the Exalted, then the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, is more fitting for this claim as he has no human father or mother. Reflecting on this verse alone is enough to understand the truth namely, the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, is a righteous servant, Messenger and Holy Prophet of Allah, the Exalted.

The miracles of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, are also verified by the Holy Quran. It however makes it clear that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, performed these miracles with the will, permission and command of Allah, the Exalted. If the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine he would not need the will or permission of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 49:

*“And [make the Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] a messenger to the Children of Israel, [who will say], 'Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allāh. And I cure the blind [from birth] and the leper, and I give life to the dead - by permission of Allāh. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses...”*

The ascension of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, to the Heavens while alive further indicates the power of Allah, the Exalted, as He took the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, on this journey. If the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine he could have undertaken this journey with his own innate power. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 55:

*“[Mention] when Allāh said, "O Jesus, indeed I will take you and raise you to Myself and purify [i.e., free] you from those who disbelieve...”*”

The Holy Quran tells the Christians that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, contrary to their belief, was not crucified. The one whose image was seen on the cross was not the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, but someone who was made to look like him. Allah, the Exalted, had already raised the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, towards Heaven by this time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verses 156-158:

*“And for their disbelief and their saying against Mary a great slander. And [for] their saying, "Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the messenger of Allāh." And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them...Rather, Allāh raised him to Himself.”*

The incorrect Christian belief of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, being crucified meaning, killed, is strange in itself as a real divine

being is far beyond experiencing death. So in reality, their incorrect belief in his death by crucifixion negates their incorrect belief in his divinity by itself.

Finally, a divine being by nature is something which is self-sustaining meaning, they do not need someone else to sustain them. If a being is sustained by another then they cannot be divine. Both the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and his mother, Maryam, may Allah be pleased with her, were not divine beings as they required nourishment from Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they were not self-sustaining beings. In addition, no one can claim that as the Angels do not eat they can be considered Gods. In reality, they are also sustained by Allah, the Exalted, in a different way so they too are not self-sustaining. The fact that they have been created and will experience death, just like the rest of creation, is enough to negate divinity.

***“...Exalted is the Lord of the heavens and the earth...”***

The divine essence and attributes of Allah, the Exalted, are infinitely high and beyond the reach and comprehension of the entire creation. The one who understands this divine name will only obey Allah, the Exalted, as nothing has a higher authority, power or control than Him.

A muslim must act on this divine name by raising their aims and aspirations so they go beyond this material world and are instead directed towards the hereafter. Higher still is the aspiration which is fully focused on Allah, the Exalted, and nothing else. A muslim should also act on this divine name by raising their moral character so that they surpass bad and base character thereby following in the footsteps 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.”*

This noble character should be shown both to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience to Him, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and it must be shown to people by treating them how one desires to be treated by people.

***“...Exalted is the Lord of the heavens and the earth...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is sanctified and free of all possible flaws and deficiencies and the One who deserves to be described with every attribute of perfection.

A muslim should plead to Allah, the Exalted, to sanctify and purify them of all their sins and bestow them with attributes He loves. A muslim should therefore actively purify their body from sins. Purify themselves from following evil desires. Purify their wealth by not seeking it from doubtful or unlawful sources. Purify their minds from heedlessness of the divine law. Purify their intention so they only act for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, even in worldly deeds as these are recorded as good deeds for example, providing for one's family in a lawful manner. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 4006.

***“...Lord of the heavens and the earth, Lord of the Throne...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who possesses all sovereignty which is free of all defects. It is a sovereignty which has no beginning, no end, no reduction and no limit. Allah, the Exalted, has complete and total control over the creation through management and judgment without any limitations, partners or helpers. The King cannot be hindered or prevented from carrying out His will.

By accepting Allah, the Exalted, as the only King a muslim indirectly accepts their servanthood to Him. Therefore, they must fulfil all His commands and avoid all His prohibitions. A true servant never questions the wise decisions of the King and instead submits with full trust to His choices knowing that the wise King only decrees the best for His servant. 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.”*

When a muslim recognises Allah, the Exalted, as the King they will not turn to another when seeking help and instead only seek His support through sincere obedience to Him. They will always remember if they obey the King He will protect them from the creation. But if they obey the creation over Allah, the Exalted, the creation will not be able to protect them from the

punishment of the only King. This is indicated in a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. He declared that there is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator.

A muslim should adopt this characteristic according to their status by purifying their inner spiritual king namely, the spiritual heart through acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will cause their servants meaning, their bodily limbs, to obey their spiritual heart in acts of righteousness. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that if the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body will be pure but if the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body will become corrupt. One should not become a slave of their evil desires and instead become a true king which controls their desires according to the teachings of Islam.

Whoever perfects this will be given a spiritual kingdom in both worlds. The ultimate destination of the one who fulfils the rights of the King by perfecting servanthood has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. They will be granted a high station in the presence of the only Omnipotent King. Chapter 54 Al Qamar, verse 55:

*“In a seat of honour near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”*

## Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verse 83

فَذَرَّهُمْ يُخَوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَلْتَقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ



*“So leave them to converse vainly and amuse themselves until they meet their Day which they are promised.”*

***“So leave them to converse vainly and amuse themselves...”***

It is important for muslims to understand an important point in respect to advising others. It is the duty of muslims to advise others towards good and forbid evil but a muslim should not behave as if they have been put in charge as controllers over others. This attitude only leads to anger and bitterness especially, when others do not follow their advice. It is best for muslims to discharge their duty by advising others but they should avoid stressing over the outcome of their advice meaning, whether the person acts on their advice or not. If Allah, the Exalted, advised the greatest teacher and guide of mankind namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to stress over the outcome in many places of the Holy Quran how can a muslim claim or behave as if they have been put in charge of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

*“So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”*

The muslim who behaves as a controller will not only become bitter when people fail to follow their advice but it can lead them to giving up advising others which is a duty on all muslims according to their ability.

In addition, this attitude will also cause muslims to neglect themselves and their own duties as they are too busy concerning themselves with the duties of

others. Therefore, muslims should remain firm in commanding good and forbidding evil but refrain from observing and bothering about the outcome of their advice.

***“So leave them to converse vainly and amuse themselves...”***

As all people have not been created the same they are bound to disagree on certain things. In matters related to religion and those which differentiate between lawful and unlawful things a muslim must remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of who challenges or disagrees with them. But in matters where the choice is between to lawful worldly options a muslim is entitled to offer their opinion to others when they are requested to. But they should not waste their time nor stress if others disagree with their opinion. When one holds onto these disagreements over time they can cause enmity to build up between people which can lead to fractured and broken relationships. This can even result in the sin of severing ties with people. So in cases like this it is important for muslims to let things go and not harbour a negative feeling towards someone who disagrees with their opinion and choice. They should instead push themselves to agree to disagree and move on from the situation without any ill feelings. The one who fails to do this will find themselves always arguing and possessing enmity for others as they are bound to disagree with others on certain topics and issues due to a difference in their characteristics and mentality. Understanding and acting on this advice is a branch of finding peace in this world.

***“So leave them to converse vainly and amuse themselves...”***

Even though commanding good and forbidding evil is an important duty on each muslim yet they will encounter people who do not seem to listen nor act on the advice given to them. This is quite obvious especially in this day and age. In cases like this it is best not to give up but to consider changing one's technique. Advising others through words is one way of commanding good and forbidding evil but a better way is to advise others through one's actions. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the greatest teacher as he advised others through his words and actions. This leading by example technique is important to adopt as it is more likely to affect others in a positive way. But those who still fail to accept this technique of commanding good and forbidding evil should be left alone. One should continue showing a practical example but perhaps take a step back from verbally advising them as continuously advising others who do not pay attention can cause both parties to become irritated and angered. This contradicts the very attitude a muslim should possess when they advise others towards good. It is a sad truth that one should not bother verbally imposing themselves on people who do not care what they have to say. But they should continue advising others through their actions. In this way one not only helps themselves by refining their own character but also fulfils their duty in commanding good and forbidding evil. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 17:

*“...enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.”*

***“So leave them to converse vainly and amuse themselves...”***

It is important for Muslims especially, in this day and age to understand the difference between those who discuss certain topics which may be considered controversial in order to genuinely benefit people through a positive change and those who simply discuss these issues in order to attract the attention of others. Those who desire a positive change in society will always show respect and good character towards others especially, to those they are challenging through their words. They never result to vulgar language or actions in order to declare their point of view. They instead study and understand the subject they are debating about without misinterpreting or falsifying information in order to support their point of view. Their criticism is always constructive and their genuine and sincere intention to improve the society is shown through their behaviour and words. These are the people who Muslims should pay attention to as if they are correct it will improve society for everyone. But if their viewpoint is wrong they will accept the truth when it is made clear to them by others. But those who behave opposite to this correct attitude, whether they are found in the media or anywhere else, should simply be ignored as they do not desire to improve the lives of people. They are starved for attention and like an infant act out in order to attract some attention from others. Muslims should not circulate and pass on videos or other content which are linked to people like this as they are playing right into their hands and giving them the attention they so badly desire. Debating with these people is a complete waste of time because of their evil intention and behaviour. Muslims should instead place their efforts in other useful places which benefit them and others in both worlds.

***“So leave them to converse vainly and amuse themselves...”***

The Holy Quran teaches mankind that certain people are so drowned in the material world no advice will penetrate their veiled hearts. The Holy Quran describes how this group of people possesses hearts harder than rocks. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

*“Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder...”*

At this point those who desire to spread the word of Islam should separate from this type of person and instead concentrate on others. But it is important to note, even in this case a muslim should always demonstrate good character towards the sinful as they can repent at anytime. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

*“...and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace.”*

Similarly, in another verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that when a limit is reached it is best to separate and leave the stubborn and misguided people to their false beliefs. A day will undoubtedly come

when Allah, the Exalted, will inform mankind who was rightly guided and who was lost in darkness. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 55:

*“And when they hear ill speech, they turn away from it and say, “For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. Peace will be upon you; we seek not the ignorant.””*

Muslims should never get depressed and confused when their good advice does not affect others. In some cases, these people are drowned in sins to such an extent their heart becomes veiled. This veil prevents the good advice affecting them in a positive way. A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, explains how a sin causes a black spot to be etched onto the spiritual heart. The more one sins the more their spiritual heart becomes engrossed by this darkness. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

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

This is similar to another verse where Allah, the Exalted, declares that their ears, eyes and hearts have been veiled from the truth and they therefore cannot be guided to the truth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 7:

*“Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil...”*

The fault does not lie with the message of Islam but in the hearts of the misguided. Just like the fault lies in the eyes of a blind person and not the bright Sun. Unfortunately, this stubborn attitude has become a widespread problem within society. Some of these people believe in Islam yet have closed their hearts and minds to the teachings of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They refuse to accept any good advice which would benefit them in both worlds.

Those who choose to spread the word of Islam should understand that there are two types of mind-sets people can adopt. The first is when someone makes their mind up beforehand about an issue and then searches and accepts only those things which support their predetermined belief. Whereas, the correct attitude is to live with an open mind by searching and accepting strong evidence regarding different issues. The first mentality will only cause problems from a personal level right up to a national level. Unfortunately, this is how some aspects of the media work. They predetermine the information they would like to publish, find bits of weak supporting evidence and then blow it out of proportion for the world to see. Those spreading the word of Islam should avoid the first type of people and instead concentrate on inviting the second group towards the truth.

***“So leave them to converse vainly and amuse themselves until they meet their Day which they are promised.”***

As these two things prevent one from practically preparing for the Day of Judgement they should be avoided. Practically preparing for it involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“So leave them to converse vainly and amuse themselves until they meet their Day which they are promised.”***

As these two things prevent one from practically preparing for the Day of Judgement they should be avoided. Practically preparing for it involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

There are many muslims who dedicate much of their time, effort and wealth on things which are neither righteous deeds nor sins meaning, they are vain things. Vain things can also include acquiring unnecessary things, such as beautifying one's home beyond their necessities. Even though, they might be correct in their claim that they are not committing sins it is important to understand a fact. Namely, time is a precious gift from Allah, the Exalted, which cannot be gained once it departs. All other things can be acquired, such as wealth, all other things except time. So when one dedicates their time as well as other blessings such as wealth to unnecessary and extra things meaning, vain things, it will only lead to a great regret on Judgment Day. This will occur when they observe the reward given to those who made use of their time and performed righteous deeds. Time wasters may have avoided sins which save them from punishment but as they wasted time on vain things they may face criticism. And they will surely lose out on the reward they could have gained if they utilised their time and other blessings correctly.

In addition, it is important to understand that the more one indulges in vain things the closer they are to falling into extravagance and waste both of

which are blame worthy. For example, those who waste blessings are considered the siblings of the Devil. And it can be argued when one dedicates their time to vain things they have in fact wasted the precious blessing of time. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 27:

*“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils...”*

***“So leave them to converse vainly and amuse themselves until they meet their Day which they are promised.”***

As these two things prevent one from practically preparing for the Day of Judgement they should be avoided. Practically preparing for it involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“So leave them to converse vainly and amuse themselves until they meet their Day which they are promised.”***

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by this promise.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“So leave them to converse vainly and amuse themselves until they meet their Day which they are promised.”***

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by this promise. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 84-87

وَهُوَ الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاءِ إِلَهٌُ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَهٌُ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ  
الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٨٤﴾

وَتَبَارَكَ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَعِنْدَهُ  
عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

وَلَا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الشَّفَعَةَ إِلَّا مَنْ  
شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

وَلَيْن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

*“And it is He [i.e., Allah] who is [the only] deity in the heaven, and on the earth [the only] deity. And He is the Wise, the Knowing.*

*And blessed is He to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them and with whom is knowledge of the Hour and to whom you will be returned.*

*And those they invoke besides Him do not possess [power of] intercession; but only those who testify to the truth, and they know.*

*And if you asked them who created them, they would surely say, "Allah."  
So how are they deluded?"*

***“And it is He [i.e., Allah] who is [the only] deity in the heaven, and on the earth [the only] deity...”***

There are many Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which advise mankind that whoever testifies that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted, will be saved from the fire of Hell. One such example is found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128.

The meaning of these Hadiths is that whoever dies while believing in this testimony will either enter Paradise and escape Hell or they will enter Hell to the extent of their sins and then eventually be allowed into Paradise where they will dwell forever. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7510.

It is important to note, that those who desire to enter Paradise without entering Hell first must not only declare their belief in Islam verbally but they must also fulfil its conditions and obligations. The testimony of faith is undoubtedly the key to Paradise but a key needs teeth in order to unlock a specific door. The teeth of the key to Paradise are its obligations and duties. Without them meaning, the key without its teeth, will not open the door to Paradise. This is proven through many Hadiths which indicate entry into Paradise requires one to fulfil the conditions and duties of Islam. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1397, indicates that the testimony must be supported by actions in the form of the pillars of Islam, such as establishing the obligatory prayers.

The first part of the testimony namely, there is none worthy of worship save Allah, the Exalted, means that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who must be obeyed and never disobeyed. When one accepts Allah, the Exalted, as their God they must not obey anything which leads to His disobedience as Allah, the Exalted, alone is their Master and they are only His slaves. But the moment one obeys anything which leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they have corrupted their belief in His Oneness which has been indicated in chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

*“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”*

The Holy Quran has warned muslims that whoever commits sins is in reality worshipping the Devil as they have obeyed him over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 36 Yaseen, verse 60:

*“Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam, that you not worship Satan - [for] indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”*

The muslims who reject their desires, the desires of others and the commands of the Devil and instead only obey Allah, the Exalted, have truly taken Allah, the Exalted, as their God. These muslims have been granted

the protection of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These muslims have practically actualised the testimony of Islam as they supported their verbal and internal claim with sincere actions according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When one acts according to his traditions they have fulfilled the second aspect of the testimony namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted. These muslims are the ones referred to in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128. It advises they will be saved from the Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted.

The person who declares Islam with the tongue and internally accepts it is undoubtedly a muslim but their true sincere belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, is diminished according to their sins.

An aspect of truly acting on the testimony is sincerely loving Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has indicated this in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. It advises that this is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is when one loves what Allah, the Exalted, loves and hates what He hates. As this was the characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2333, muslims have been commanded to follow 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...”*

It is clear from Islamic teachings that loving what Allah, the Exalted, hates and disliking what Allah, the Exalted, loves is a clear indication of a person following their own desires and obeying them over Allah, the Exalted. This attitude reduces one's belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. The following verse makes it clear that adopting this mentality is a deviation from true belief in the testimony of Islam. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 24:

*“Say, [O Muhammad], “If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.””*

The one who worships Allah, the Exalted, according to their own desires worships Him on the edge. Meaning, when they face times of ease they become pleased but when they encounter difficulties they turn away from His obedience in anger. 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 Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, informs muslims how to correctly believe and act on the testimony of faith, which prevents one being harmed by the fire of Hell in the next world. This is to first complete the obligatory duties correctly while fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes. Then one must add to this by performing voluntary righteous deeds, the best of which are the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the love of Allah, the Exalted, and causes Allah, the Exalted, to empower every organ of their body so that they only obey Him. This true and sincere obedience is the fulfilment of the testimony of faith. This is the sound heart which contains only the love of Allah, the Exalted, and is free of worldly desires and the love of the material world. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

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

It is important to note, this does not mean a muslim becomes free from committing sins but it means they sincerely repent from them whenever they are rarely committed.

To conclude, it is vital for muslims to not only declare the testimony of Islam internally and verbally but they must also show it in their actions as this is the only way to achieve true success in this world and completely escape punishment in the next world also.

***“And it is He [i.e., Allah] who is [the only] deity in the heaven, and on the earth [the only] deity...”***

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

***“...And He is the Wise...”***

Allah, the Exalted, possesses infinite knowledge of all things and their real nature and acts according to His infinite wisdom in a perfect manner. The muslim who understands this divine name will never object to His choices and decrees knowing that there is wisdom behind each choice of Allah, the Exalted, which benefits His servants even if they are not obvious to 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 act on this divine name by using their knowledge and blessings according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, as this is the ultimate wisdom a person can possess.

***“...And He is...the Knowing.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“And blessed is He to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who possesses all sovereignty which is free of all defects. It is a sovereignty which has no beginning, no end, no reduction and no limit. Allah, the Exalted, has complete and total control over the creation through management and judgment without any limitations, partners or helpers. The King cannot be hindered or prevented from carrying out His will.

By accepting Allah, the Exalted, as the only King a muslim indirectly accepts their servanthood to Him. Therefore, they must fulfil all His commands and avoid all His prohibitions. A true servant never questions the wise decisions of the King and instead submits with full trust to His choices knowing that the wise King only decrees the best for His servant. 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.”*

When a muslim recognises Allah, the Exalted, as the King they will not turn to another when seeking help and instead only seek His support through sincere obedience to Him. They will always remember if they obey the King He will protect them from the creation. But if they obey the creation over

Allah, the Exalted, the creation will not be able to protect them from the punishment of the only King. This is indicated in a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. He declared that there is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator.

A muslim should adopt this characteristic according to their status by purifying their inner spiritual king namely, the spiritual heart through acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will cause their servants meaning, their bodily limbs, to obey their spiritual heart in acts of righteousness. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that if the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body will be pure but if the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body will become corrupt. One should not become a slave of their evil desires and instead become a true king which controls their desires according to the teachings of Islam.

Whoever perfects this will be given a spiritual kingdom in both worlds. The ultimate destination of the one who fulfils the rights of the King by perfecting servanthood has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. They will be granted a high station in the presence of the only Omnipotent King. Chapter 54 Al Qamar, verse 55:

*“In a seat of honour near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”*

***“...and with Whom is knowledge of the Hour and to whom you will be returned.”***

This knowledge was not disclosed to mankind in order to prevent them from laziness and to stimulate fear. This should encourage a muslim to practically prepare for it with every moment they are granted. This has been indicated at the end of this verse. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“...and with Whom is knowledge of the Hour and to whom you will be returned.”***

This knowledge was not disclosed to mankind in order to prevent them from laziness and to stimulate fear. This should encourage a muslim to practically prepare for it with every moment they are granted. This has been indicated at the end of this verse. This involves using the blessings one has 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 to whom you will be returned.”***

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.

***“...and to whom you will be returned.”***

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 those they invoke besides Him do not possess [power of] intercession...”***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, they are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But they are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

*“Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”*

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort

of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

***“And those they invoke besides Him do not possess [power of] intercession; but only those who testify to the truth...”***

This refers to the one who sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted.

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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to

fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“And those they invoke besides Him do not possess [power of] intercession; but only those who testify to the truth and they know.”***

This refers to the one who sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted. The root of this obedience is gaining and acting upon knowledge.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“And those they invoke besides Him do not possess [power of] intercession; but only those who testify to the truth and they know.”***

This refers to the one who sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted. The root of this obedience is gaining and acting upon knowledge. This leads to certainty of faith.

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“And those they invoke besides Him do not possess [power of] intercession; but only those who testify to the truth and they know.”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he is the first person to intercede and the first person whose intercession will be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

A muslim should therefore strive to make themselves worthy of the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by performing the actions which result in this such as supplicating for it after hearing the call to prayer. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 679. But this would require one to regularly attend the obligatory prayers at a Mosque instead of offering them at home. The greatest action which will result in the intercession is learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A muslim should not live in heedlessness by rejecting this duty and then expect intercession on Judgment Day as this is closer to wishful thinking which is blame worthy and of no real value compared to true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

Unfortunately, some muslims who have adopted this wishful thinking expect to obtain Paradise through this intercession even though they do not obey 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. These muslims must realise that even though the intercession is a

fact some muslims who will have their punishment reduced through intercession will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

***“And if you asked them who created them, they would surely say,  
"Allāh." So how are they deluded?”***

The non-muslims of Mecca did believe in Allah, the Exalted, yet foolishly ascribed partners to Him.

Allah, the Exalted, is Al Khaliq, which means the Creator, Al Baari which means the Maker and Al Musawwir which means the Fashioner.

The Creator is the One who brings something into existence. In reality, there is no Creator except Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One who creates without any aid from another. On other hand, an inventor only invents things through the aid of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 96:

*“While Allah created you and that which you do?”*

The Maker is the One who arranges all of the creation and prepares them for receiving the forms He has chosen for them which is linked to the next divine name mentioned earlier namely, the Fashioner.

The Creator makes things manifest. The Maker chooses their shape, appearance, and time of creation. The Fashioner fashions the creation according to His divine will.

After understanding these divine names a muslim must trust Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. If Allah, the Exalted, created and manages the entire universe He is more than capable in sorting out a person's problems. In addition, these names indicate that Allah, the Exalted, is the One who creates and chooses all things. So a muslim should not challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to nothing except disappointment. It is therefore better to submit obediently and patiently await relief knowing that Allah, the Exalted, only decrees the best for His servants even if this wisdom is not obvious to them. As a muslim is short sighted it is better to trust in the Creator whose wisdom has no limits. 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 if you asked them who created them, they would surely say,  
"Allāh." So how are they deluded?”***

The non-muslims of Mecca did believe in Allah, the Exalted, yet foolishly ascribed partners to Him. A root cause of this was blind imitation of their forefathers.

A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation.

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.

***“And if you asked them who created them, they would surely say,  
"Allāh." So how are they deluded?”***

The non-muslims of Mecca did believe in Allah, the Exalted, yet foolishly ascribed partners to Him. A root cause of this was blind imitation of their forefathers.

A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Blind imitation is even disliked within Islam.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

***“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”***

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of

the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five daily obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.

Chapter 43 – Az Zukhruf, Verses 88-89 of 89

﴿٨٨﴾ وَقِيلَ لَهُ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ قَوْمٌ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

﴿٨٩﴾ فَأَصْفَحْ عَنْهُمْ وَقُلْ سَلَامٌ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ

*“And [Allah acknowledges] his [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] saying, “O my Lord, indeed these are a people who do not believe.”*

*So turn aside from them and say, “Peace.” But they are going to know.”*

***“And [Allah acknowledges] his [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] saying, “O my Lord, indeed these are a people who do not believe.””***

True belief involves sincerity.

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 Allah, the Exalted, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran and to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*“And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion.....”*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which

contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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 [Allah acknowledges] his [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] saying, "O my Lord, indeed these are a people who do not believe."”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“So turn aside from them and say, “Peace.”...”***

It is important for muslims to understand an important point in respect to advising others. It is the duty of muslims to advise others towards good and forbid evil but a muslim should not behave as if they have been put in charge as controllers over others. This attitude only leads to anger and bitterness especially, when others do not follow their advice. It is best for muslims to discharge their duty by advising others but they should avoid stressing over the outcome of their advice meaning, whether the person acts on their advice or not. If Allah, the Exalted, advised the greatest teacher and guide of mankind namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to stress over the outcome in many places of the Holy Quran how can a muslim claim or behave as if they have been put in charge of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

*“So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”*

The muslim who behaves as a controller will not only become bitter when people fail to follow their advice but it can lead them to giving up advising others which is a duty on all muslims according to their ability.

In addition, this attitude will also cause muslims to neglect themselves and their own duties as they are too busy concerning themselves with the duties of

others. Therefore, muslims should remain firm in commanding good and forbidding evil but refrain from observing and bothering about the outcome of their advice.

***“So turn aside from them and say, “Peace.”...”***

Even though commanding good and forbidding evil is an important duty on each muslim yet they will encounter people who do not seem to listen nor act on the advice given to them. This is quite obvious especially in this day and age. In cases like this it is best not to give up but to consider changing one's technique. Advising others through words is one way of commanding good and forbidding evil but a better way is to advise others through one's actions. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the greatest teacher as he advised others through his words and actions. This leading by example technique is important to adopt as it is more likely to affect others in a positive way. But those who still fail to accept this technique of commanding good and forbidding evil should be left alone. One should continue showing a practical example but perhaps take a step back from verbally advising them as continuously advising others who do not pay attention can cause both parties to become irritated and angered. This contradicts the very attitude a muslim should possess when they advise others towards good. It is a sad truth that one should not bother verbally imposing themselves on people who do not care what they have to say. But they should continue advising others through their actions. In this way one not only helps themselves by refining their own character but also fulfils their duty in commanding good and forbidding evil. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 17:

*“...enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.”*

***“So turn aside from them and say, “Peace.”...”***

It is important for Muslims especially, in this day and age to understand the difference between those who discuss certain topics which may be considered controversial in order to genuinely benefit people through a positive change and those who simply discuss these issues in order to attract the attention of others. Those who desire a positive change in society will always show respect and good character towards others especially, to those they are challenging through their words. They never result to vulgar language or actions in order to declare their point of view. They instead study and understand the subject they are debating about without misinterpreting or falsifying information in order to support their point of view. Their criticism is always constructive and their genuine and sincere intention to improve the society is shown through their behaviour and words. These are the people who Muslims should pay attention to as if they are correct it will improve society for everyone. But if their viewpoint is wrong they will accept the truth when it is made clear to them by others. But those who behave opposite to this correct attitude, whether they are found in the media or anywhere else, should simply be ignored as they do not desire to improve the lives of people. They are starved for attention and like an infant act out in order to attract some attention from others. Muslims should not circulate and pass on videos or other content which are linked to people like this as they are playing right into their hands and giving them the attention they so badly desire. Debating with these people is a complete waste of time because of their evil intention and behaviour. Muslims should instead place their efforts in other useful places which benefit them and others in both worlds.

***“So turn aside from them and say, “Peace.”...”***

The Holy Quran teaches mankind that certain people are so drowned in the material world no advice will penetrate their veiled hearts. The Holy Quran describes how this group of people possesses hearts harder than rocks. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

*“Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder...”*

At this point those who desire to spread the word of Islam should separate from this type of person and instead concentrate on others. But it is important to note, even in this case a muslim should always demonstrate good character towards the sinful as they can repent at anytime. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

*“...and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace.”*

Similarly, in another verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that when a limit is reached it is best to separate and leave the stubborn and misguided people to their false beliefs. A day will undoubtedly come

when Allah, the Exalted, will inform mankind who was rightly guided and who was lost in darkness. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 55:

*“And when they hear ill speech, they turn away from it and say, “For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. Peace will be upon you; we seek not the ignorant.””*

Muslims should never get depressed and confused when their good advice does not affect others. In some cases, these people are drowned in sins to such an extent their heart becomes veiled. This veil prevents the good advice affecting them in a positive way. A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, explains how a sin causes a black spot to be etched onto the spiritual heart. The more one sins the more their spiritual heart becomes engrossed by this darkness. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

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

This is similar to another verse where Allah, the Exalted, declares that their ears, eyes and hearts have been veiled from the truth and they therefore cannot be guided to the truth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 7:

*“Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil...”*

The fault does not lie with the message of Islam but in the hearts of the misguided. Just like the fault lies in the eyes of a blind person and not the bright Sun. Unfortunately, this stubborn attitude has become a widespread problem within society. Some of these people believe in Islam yet have closed their hearts and minds to the teachings of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They refuse to accept any good advice which would benefit them in both worlds.

Those who choose to spread the word of Islam should understand that there are two types of mind-sets people can adopt. The first is when someone makes their mind up beforehand about an issue and then searches and accepts only those things which support their predetermined belief. Whereas, the correct attitude is to live with an open mind by searching and accepting strong evidence regarding different issues. The first mentality will only cause problems from a personal level right up to a national level. Unfortunately, this is how some aspects of the media work. They predetermine the information they would like to publish, find bits of weak supporting evidence and then blow it out of proportion for the world to see. Those spreading the word of Islam should avoid the first type of people and instead concentrate on inviting the second group towards the truth.

***“And [Allāh acknowledges] his [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] saying, "O my Lord, indeed these are a people who do not believe." So turn aside from them and say, "Peace." ...”***

These verses also warn against bad 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.”*

***“...But they are going to know.”***

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

***“...But they are going to know.”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after

work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“...But they are going to know.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“...But they are going to know.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and

religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Chapter 44 – Ad Dukhan, Verse 1



“Ḥā, Meem.”

## **“Ḥā, Meem.”**

Even though the actual meaning of these verses found within the Holy Quran are unknown using letters from the alphabet does indicate the importance of education and knowledge.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

Chapter 44 – Ad Dukhan, Verses 2-6

وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٢﴾

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ ﴿٣﴾

فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

أَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ ﴿٥﴾

رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَبِّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦﴾

*“By the clear Book.*

*Indeed, We sent it down during a blessed night. Indeed, We were to warn [mankind].*

*Therein [i.e., on that night] is made distinct every precise matter.*

*[Every] matter [proceeding] from Us. We have always sent messages to  
mankind.*

*As mercy from your Lord. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing.”*

***“By the clear Book...Indeed, We were to warn [mankind]...We have always sent messages to mankind. As mercy from your Lord.”***

One will only benefit from the Holy Quran when they fulfil its rights.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete

loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“By the clear Book. Indeed, We sent it down during a blessed night...”***

The Holy Quran was sent down from the Preserved Tablet on the Night of Power, believed to be the 27<sup>th</sup> Night of Ramadan, all at once. Chapter 97 Al Qadr, verse 1:

*“Indeed, We sent it [i.e., the Quran] down during the Night of Power.”*

It was then lodged in the House of Might in the lowest Heaven. Then it was brought down to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, bit by bit over 23 years. This has been mentioned in Tafsir Al Qurtubi, Volume 1, Page 472.

It is commonly observed that in the special days and nights of the Islamic year, such as the night of power, which is considered to be on the 27th night of the Islamic month of Ramadan according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1386, muslims come out in droves and inhabit the Mosques or pray more at home. Even though, this is a good thing it is important to understand that a muslim should not only behave in this manner on the special days and nights of the Islamic year. They should instead respect each day and night throughout the whole year by fulfilling their duties in them without neglect. They should never believe the worship of one day or night in the year will make up for their neglect of the rest of year as this is completely untrue and a trick of the Devil. Being a muslim is

a 24/7 duty it is not a duty which extends only on certain days and nights. Meaning, a muslim must fulfil their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions, face destiny with patience and fulfil the rights of people every day of their life according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Cherry picking certain days and nights is a major reason why muslims feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, as they only turn to Him occasionally. The truth is simple, what muslims dedicate to Allah, the Exalted, is what they will receive in return. If they only dedicate a few days or nights in the year to Him then they should not expect a great return. Islam does not demand one to pray all night instead it demands muslims to fulfil their obligatory duties and as much of the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as possible. This does not take much time up and leaves one with plenty of time to do other things as well.

In reality, the one who does not respect every day and night by fulfilling their duties in them will find that even the special days and nights are just ordinary days and nights for them. But the one who respects every day and night will find that every day and night is like the special days and nights, like the night of power, for them. Meaning, Allah, the Exalted, will bless them just like He blesses them on the special days and nights in the Islamic year.

***“By the clear Book. Indeed, We sent it down during a blessed night...Therein [i.e., on that night] is made distinct every precise matter. [Every] matter [proceeding] from Us...”***

The Holy Quran was sent down from the Preserved Tablet on the Night of Power, believed to be the 27<sup>th</sup> Night of Ramadan, all at once. Chapter 97 Al Qadr, verse 1:

*“Indeed, We sent it [i.e., the Quran] down during the Night of Power.”*

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The decrees of Allah, the Exalted, for the following year is revealed to the Angels.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not

desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, there are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But there are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

*“Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”*

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

***“...Indeed, We were to warn [mankind].”***

This verse indicates the importance of implementing the teachings of Islam as reminders namely; glad tidings and warnings only benefit the person who acts on them. For example, those who ignore road hazard signs are often the ones who end up in dangerous situations. But those who act upon these hazards signs are protected from this danger. The glad tidings indicate the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon lead to the gardens of Paradise. And the warnings are the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon protects one from divine punishment such as Hell.

***“...We have always sent messages [via Holy Prophets, peace be upon them] to mankind.”***

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is for them to be sincerely obeyed and followed. 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.

***“...Indeed, He is the Hearing...”***

Nothing irrespective of its size and location is out of the reach of the divine sight and hearing of Allah, the Exalted.

The muslim who understands this divine name will be extremely cautious in their actions and speech. The same way one becomes vigilant over their actions when they are in the hearing and seeing range of someone they respect or fear a true muslim will be vigilant over their behaviour knowing no word or action escapes Allah, the Exalted. In fact, acting in this way is the high level of faith which has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. If one remains steadfast on this behaviour then they will eventually reach excellence of faith whereby they perform acts, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted, constantly watching their inner and outer being. This attitude will prevent sins and encourage one to sincerely perform righteous deeds.

In addition, this divine name encourages muslims never to give up hope whenever they face a difficulty thereby believing no one is aware or even cares about them. Allah, the Exalted, undoubtedly hears and sees their distress and will respond at the time which is best for His servant. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

*“And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by using these two senses in the way commanded by Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, one should not observe unlawful and vain things nor should they listen to unlawful and vain things. They should instead use them in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to avoid vain things as they are often the first step to the unlawful. This is achieved by acting on the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502. It advises that when one fulfils the commands of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to the obligatory duties and then strives in voluntary righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, He empowers their senses such as their sight and hearing so that they only use them in accordance to His desire and pleasure.

***“...Indeed, He is...the Knowing.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

Chapter 44 – Ad Dukhan, Verses 7-9

رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۗ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ  
٧

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ  
الْأَوَّلِينَ ۗ ٨

بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكِّ يَلْعَبُونَ ٩

*“Lord of the heavens and the earth and that between them, if you would be certain.*

*There is no deity except Him; He gives life and causes death. [He is] your Lord and the Lord of your first forefathers.*

*But they are in doubt, amusing themselves.”*

***“Lord of the heavens and the earth and that between them...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord of the Worlds as He is the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe. He has full control over every single entity from the smallest atom to the largest creation such as the divine throne. Except for a few members of the creation every atom in existence recognises and acknowledges this great fact and thus continuously praises Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 44:

*"The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them exalt Him. And there is not a thing except that it exalts [Allah] by His praise, but you do not understand their [way of] exalting..."*

No creature has the power to free themselves of His Lordship whether they believe in Him or not. His Lordship has no equivalent as it includes all of creation. It has no beginning, no end and no decline in authority or control. Allah, the Exalted, in His infinite knowledge knew the weakness of the creation in praising Him, according to His infinite status, so out of mercy He declared how to praise Him in this verse. Otherwise, how can a finite creature praise the Creator, according to His infinite status, without aid from Allah, the Exalted? This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 879.

As Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord of the universe He must be obeyed and never disobeyed. A muslim must only be obedient to others when it involves the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Acknowledging the Lordship of Allah, the Exalted, includes acknowledging one's servanthood to Him. This in itself is a clear declaration that a muslim must not chart their own course in life but they must simply adhere to the commands of their Lord, Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a muslim should never declare their servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, by declaring His Lordship through their words and then contradict their declaration through their actions. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 23 and 24:

*"Pharaoh said: "And who is this Lord of the Universe? Moses answered: "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and of all that is between them, if you were only to believe.""*

***“Lord of the heavens and the earth and that between them, if you would be certain...[He is] your Lord and the Lord of your first forefathers.”***

This verse is connected to chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

*“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware.””*

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere 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.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an

indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a muslim has a choice between pleasing Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments, enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person's heart indicates that it is a duty on muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a muslim. Certainty of faith allows a muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“There is no deity except Him...”***

There are many Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which advise mankind that whoever testifies that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted, will be saved from the fire of Hell. One such example is found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128.

The meaning of these Hadiths is that whoever dies while believing in this testimony will either enter Paradise and escape Hell or they will enter Hell to the extent of their sins and then eventually be allowed into Paradise where they will dwell forever. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7510.

It is important to note, that those who desire to enter Paradise without entering Hell first must not only declare their belief in Islam verbally but they must also fulfil its conditions and obligations. The testimony of faith is undoubtedly the key to Paradise but a key needs teeth in order to unlock a specific door. The teeth of the key to Paradise are its obligations and duties. Without them meaning, the key without its teeth, will not open the door to Paradise. This is proven through many Hadiths which indicate entry into Paradise requires one to fulfil the conditions and duties of Islam. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1397, indicates that the testimony must be supported by actions in the form of the pillars of Islam, such as establishing the obligatory prayers.

The first part of the testimony namely, there is none worthy of worship save Allah, the Exalted, means that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who must be obeyed and never disobeyed. When one accepts Allah, the Exalted, as their God they must not obey anything which leads to His disobedience as Allah, the Exalted, alone is their Master and they are only His slaves. But the moment one obeys anything which leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they have corrupted their belief in His Oneness which has been indicated in chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

*“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”*

The Holy Quran has warned muslims that whoever commits sins is in reality worshipping the Devil as they have obeyed him over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 36 Yaseen, verse 60:

*“Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam, that you not worship Satan - [for] indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”*

The muslims who reject their desires, the desires of others and the commands of the Devil and instead only obey Allah, the Exalted, have truly taken Allah, the Exalted, as their God. These muslims have been granted

the protection of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These muslims have practically actualised the testimony of Islam as they supported their verbal and internal claim with sincere actions according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When one acts according to his traditions they have fulfilled the second aspect of the testimony namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted. These muslims are the ones referred to in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128. It advises they will be saved from the Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted.

The person who declares Islam with the tongue and internally accepts it is undoubtedly a muslim but their true sincere belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, is diminished according to their sins.

An aspect of truly acting on the testimony is sincerely loving Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has indicated this in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. It advises that this is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is when one loves what Allah, the Exalted, loves and hates what He hates. As this was the characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2333, muslims have been commanded to follow 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...”*

It is clear from Islamic teachings that loving what Allah, the Exalted, hates and disliking what Allah, the Exalted, loves is a clear indication of a person following their own desires and obeying them over Allah, the Exalted. This attitude reduces one's belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. The following verse makes it clear that adopting this mentality is a deviation from true belief in the testimony of Islam. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 24:

*“Say, [O Muhammad], “If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.””*

The one who worships Allah, the Exalted, according to their own desires worships Him on the edge. Meaning, when they face times of ease they become pleased but when they encounter difficulties they turn away from His obedience in anger. 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 Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, informs muslims how to correctly believe and act on the testimony of faith, which prevents one being harmed by the fire of Hell in the next world. This is to first complete the obligatory duties correctly while fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes. Then one must add to this by performing voluntary righteous deeds, the best of which are the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the love of Allah, the Exalted, and causes Allah, the Exalted, to empower every organ of their body so that they only obey Him. This true and sincere obedience is the fulfilment of the testimony of faith. This is the sound heart which contains only the love of Allah, the Exalted, and is free of worldly desires and the love of the material world. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

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

It is important to note, this does not mean a muslim becomes free from committing sins but it means they sincerely repent from them whenever they are rarely committed.

To conclude, it is vital for muslims to not only declare the testimony of Islam internally and verbally but they must also show it in their actions as this is the only way to achieve true success in this world and completely escape punishment in the next world also.

***“...He gives life and causes death...”***

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving

for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

*“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.” But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”*

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

***“...He gives life and causes death...”***

Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The only way to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

***“...He gives life and causes death...”***

It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of the material world. Unfortunately, muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared.

It is important for muslims to understand that no matter how long they live life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A muslim only fails preparing for the hereafter correctly because of their pursuit of the excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities.

A muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“...He gives life and causes death...”***

Allah, the Exalted, alone created and controls both life and death.

The muslim who understands this divine name will submit and sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience without fearing any of the creation while knowing nothing controls life or death except Allah, the Exalted. In addition, a muslim who recognises this fact will understand that as Allah, the Exalted, chose the beginning and end of every creation He has also chosen everything that occurs in between. The choices of Allah, the Exalted, are unavoidable so one should not become impatient when facing them. Instead they should simply sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in every situation so that they obtain reward with every passing moment. For example, they should demonstrate patience during times of difficulty and demonstrate true gratitude by using the blessings they possess correctly in times of ease. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500.

A muslim should act on this divine name by bringing their spiritual heart to life and cause death to their ego and negative characteristics by striving to remove them from themselves through obtaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“But they are in doubt, amusing themselves.”***

When one harbours doubts regarding Islam this leads them to misusing the blessings they have been granted meaning, in ways pleasing to themselves and other people. The root of doubts is ignorance.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“But they are in doubt, amusing themselves.”***

When one harbours doubts regarding Islam this leads them to misusing the blessings they have been granted meaning, in ways pleasing to themselves and other people. The root of doubts is ignorance. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

Chapter 44 – Ad Dukhan, Verses 10-16

فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٠﴾

يَغْشَى النَّاسَ هَذَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾

رَبَّنَا اكْشِفْ عَنَّا الْعَذَابَ إِنَّا مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

أَنَّى لَهُمُ الذِّكْرَى وَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٣﴾

ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا مُعَلَّمٌ مَجْنُونٌ ﴿١٤﴾

إِنَّا كَاشِفُو الْعَذَابِ قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ عَائِدُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرَىٰ إِنَّا مُنْقِمُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

*"Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke.*

*Covering the people; this is a painful torment.*

*[The non-muslims of Mecca will say], "Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers."*

*How will there be for them a reminder [at that time]? And there had come to them a clear Messenger.*

*Then they turned away from him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and said, "[He was] taught [and is] a madman."*

*Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you will return [to disobedience].*

*The Day We will strike with the greatest assault, indeed, We will take retribution."*

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.””***

Generally speaking, this behaviour is similar to many muslims today who declare their belief whenever they are struck with calamities surprised that they are facing difficulties even though they are sincere believers.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4297, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a day would soon come when other nations would attack the muslim nation and even though they would be great in number they would be deemed insignificant by the world. Allah, the Exalted, would remove the fear of muslims from the hearts’ of the other nations. This would occur because of the muslim nation’s love for the material world and their hatred for death.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were small in number yet, they overcame entire nations whereas the muslims today are greater in number yet, have no social or political influence in the world. This is because the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, lived their lives according to the teachings of Islam thereby, favouring and preparing for the hereafter over enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. Whereas, most of the muslims today have adopted the opposite mind-set. It is important to understand that the root of all sins is the love of the material world. This is because any sin which is committed is done out of love and desire for it. The material world can be split into four aspects: fame, fortune, authority

and one's social life, such as their relatives and friends. It is in the excess pursuit of these things which lead to sins, such as earning unlawful wealth out of love for fortune. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that love for wealth and authority is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction two hungry wolves would cause if they were let loose on a herd of sheep. Whenever people seek the excess of these aspects of the material world it always leads to disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. When this occurs the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is removed which leads to nothing but trouble.

Even though, some muslims believe pursuing the excess things of the material world is harmless it is something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3158. He warned that he did not fear poverty for muslims. What he feared was that muslims would pursue the excess of this material world, such as excess wealth, and this would cause them to compete with each other over it and this would lead to their destruction. As warned in this Hadith this was the behaviour of the past nations.

As the material world is limited it is obvious that people would have to compete over it if they desired more than their necessities. This competition would cause them to adopt the characteristics which contradict the character of a true muslim, such as envy and enmity for others. They would stop caring for each other as they are too busy competing in gathering and hoarding the material world. And they would contradict the advice given in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6011, which advises that muslims should act like one body when any part of the body suffers from an illness the rest of the body shares in the pain. This competition would drive a

muslim to stop loving for others what they love for themselves which is a characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, as they desire to outdo their fellow muslims in worldly things. Persisting on this competition will cause a muslim to love, hate, give and withhold all for the sake of the material world instead of for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This competition is the difference between the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and many of the muslims today.

If muslims desire to regain the strength and influence Islam once had they must strive and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over striving for obtaining and hoarding the excess of this material world. This must occur from an individual level until it affects the whole nation.

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.””***

Generally speaking, this behaviour is similar to many muslims today who declare their belief whenever they are struck with calamities surprised that they are facing difficulties even though they are sincere believers.

Even though the number of muslims have increased over time it is obvious that the strength of muslims has only decreased. Each muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith believes in the authenticity of the Holy Quran as doubting it would cause them to lose their faith. In the following verse Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to obtaining superiority and success which would remove the weakness and grief muslims are experiencing all around the world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

*“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”*

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that muslims only need to become true believers in order to achieve this superiority and success in both worlds. True belief involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the

traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and those towards people, such as loving for others what one loves for themselves which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This requires one to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Through this attitude was success and superiority granted to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And if Muslims desire to achieve it then they must return to this rightly guided attitude. As Muslims believe in the Holy Quran they should understand this simple teaching and act on it.

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” ...Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you will return...”***

Generally speaking, Muslims often increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, such as attending the Mosques for the congregational prayers or reciting more spiritual exercises in times of difficulty. But in times of ease they often relax and become lazy. But it is important to note, that generally it is more important to be more on guard and increase one's obedience during times of ease than times of difficulty. This is because one often sins more during times of ease than difficulty, such as abandoning their obligatory duties. If one reviews the different misguided people in history, such as Pharaoh and Quroon they will observe that their sins only multiplied during times of ease. Someone who is facing a difficulty where they are stuck and have no option but to patiently wait for relief is less likely to sin as they desire to be relieved of their difficulty. Whereas, a person experiencing times of ease will be in a better position to enjoy and over indulge in worldly things which often leads to sins. For example, a person facing poverty is less likely to sin as many sins require wealth. Whereas, a wealthy person is in an easier position to commit those sins, such as purchasing alcohol or drugs. Therefore, muslims should take note of this and ensure they maintain or even increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, during times of ease so that they do not fall into sins and disobedience.

In addition, the one who is obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands and refraining from His prohibitions during times of ease will

gain the support of Allah, the Exalted, during their times of difficulty which will aid them to overcome them successfully. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

*“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”*

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” How will there be for them a reminder [at that time]? And there had come to them a clear Messenger. Then they turned away from him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him].”***

It is important for muslims to understand that whenever they face any type of worldly failure or regrets they should remind themselves of the regrets in the hereafter some people will have, such as the one mentioned in chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

*“He will say, “Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.””*

In this world one's regret will always be followed by another chance or other options which they can pursue in order to gain success once again. But the regret and failure of the hereafter is something which cannot be rectified meaning, there are no second chances in the next world. No one will have the opportunity to return to Earth in order to act differently.

Therefore, every muslim should be more concerned with the failures they may encounter in the hereafter over the failures and regrets of this world. This does not mean one should not strive to achieve lawful success in this

world. It means they should always prioritise gaining success in the hereafter over gaining success in this world. This is an important mentality muslims should adopt before they reach a day where reflecting on their failures and regrets will not help them in the slightest. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” How will there be for them a reminder [at that time]? And there had come to them a clear Messenger. Then they turned away from him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...”***

This outcome must be avoided by sincerely obeying and following 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.

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” How will there be for them a reminder [at that time]? And there had come to them a clear Messenger. Then they turned away from him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and said, “[He was] taught [and is] a madman.””***

The non-Muslims of Mecca spent their lives with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and full-well knew he was no liar or madman. As they were masters of the Arabic language they full-well knew that the Holy Quran was not the words of a man.

For example, one of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, Walid Bin Mughira, once held a meeting with the other non-Muslim leaders of Mecca during the time of the Holy Pilgrimage. The Holy Pilgrimage did exist before the coming of Islam but the correct practices of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been completely changed. He advised the other leaders that soon many people would enter Mecca because of the Holy Pilgrimage and they will come across the message of Islam so they needed to unanimously agree on what to say about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to deter people from accepting Islam. Someone advised that they should label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a soothsayer. But Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not a soothsayer as he did not possess any of their crazy characteristics therefore people would not accept this. Another advised that they should tell people the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was crazy and was possessed by evil spirits.

But Walid replied that it was obvious this was not true as these signs were not apparent in him. Finally, someone advised to label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a poet so that people would not pay attention to what he says. But again Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Quran or his speech were not poetry as the Arabs were masters of poetry. Walid advised everyone to claim that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a sorcerer whose goals were to cause separation between people and their religion and divisions within families. After agreeing to this plan they dispersed and waited for people to flood into Mecca for the Holy Pilgrimage and warned them not to pay attention to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they claimed he was a sorcerer. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 362.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was reciting truthful historical accounts and beneficial lessons even though he was unlettered and had not studied the previous divine scriptures, which the non-Muslims of Mecca full well knew, was a clear sign of his Prophethood.

This was supported by the fact that they themselves testified to his sincerity and honesty. In fact, during his childhood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always under the protection of Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the evils that were widespread during the age of ignorance: the time before Islam. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached maturity he was the finest person among his people, the best of them in character and repute, the best of neighbours, the most prudent, the most

honest in speech and most trustworthy. He was completely removed from immorality and other evil characteristics. Because of this he became known among the people of Mecca as Al Amin, the trustworthy. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, The Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 180.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spent his entire life amongst the non-Muslims of Mecca was enough of a proof of his declaration of Prophethood. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, invited the non-Muslims of Mecca to embrace Islam he used his 40 years amongst them as proof that he was speaking the truth. This evidence was undeniable even by the non-Muslims. This incident is recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4553. Only the arrogance of some prevented them from submitting to the truth. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

*"...for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"*

Whenever one invites others towards Islam, commands good and forbids evil they will be challenging the heedless lifestyle of many others which will inspire them to resist the truth anyway they can. The major reason all the past nations rejected their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, was due to this very reason. They could not abandon their lifestyles and characteristics and in defense of them were prepared to wage war against Allah, the Exalted, and their Holy Prophet, peace be upon him. When one takes up this important duty they must be prepared to face many hardships caused

by others including their own relatives. The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, are the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they encountered countless difficulties from their nations. One only needs to study the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to observe this fact. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472, that no one in creation had been persecuted in the path of Allah, the Exalted, more than him.

In cases like this one's response to the bad attitude of others should be educated, respectful and gentle. An example of this is found in chapter 19 Maryam, verses 46-47:

*"[His father] said, "Have you no desire for my gods, O Abraham? If you do not desist, I will surely stone you, so avoid me a prolonged time." [Abraham] said, "Peace [i.e., safety] will be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Indeed, He is ever gracious to me."*

Here the kind and respectful response of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, to the harsh attitude of his elder is discussed.

In most cases, a person must possess a character flaw if they claim to get along with everyone. Due to the differences within the members of society a person will never get along with everyone. They will always be one or

more that disagree with their mentality, life style and advice. This diversity will lead to tension and occasionally problems. But if a person is liked by everyone then in most cases it shows they have adopted the mentality of the hypocrites by being two-faced. If the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were not loved by all how can a normal person achieve this status? This is the reason one should not believe in propaganda as the group that were mistreated the most in this way were the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023.

For example, the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, was once falsely accused of illegal relations by a shameless woman. She was enticed into slandering him by the enemy of Allah, the Exalted, Quraoon. When she accused the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, publically during a religious gathering he interrogated her. When she observed his reaction she immediately retracted her accusation and admitted the truth. As a result Allah, the Exalted, destroyed Quraoon by commanding the Earth to swallow him and his great treasury. This incident has been recorded in Imam Dhahabi's, The Major Sins, Pages 166-167. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 81:

*“And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home...”*

The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were slandered on many occasions but they remained steadfast on their mission until they were granted victory by Allah, the Exalted. When Allah, the Exalted, decides to

complete a task like aiding the one who spreads the true word of faith the entire creation combined cannot stop Him.

Muslims must accept that they too will face hardships when spreading the word of Islam. Therefore, they must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, by remaining steadfast in the face of difficulties. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. If one desires to join them in the next world they must adopt this attitude also.

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” ...Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you will return [to disobedience].”***

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” ...Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you will return [to disobedience].”***

One must adopt the correct perception in order to learn lessons from the things which occur.

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so

will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” ...Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you will return [to disobedience].”***

One must adopt the correct perception in order to learn lessons from the things which occur.

It is important for a muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

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

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden message a muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” ...Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you will return [to disobedience]. The Day We will strike with the greatest assault, indeed, We will take retribution.”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For

example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” ...Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you will return [to disobedience]. The Day We will strike with the greatest assault, indeed, We will take retribution.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give

their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” ...Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you will return [to disobedience]. The Day We will strike with the greatest assault, indeed, We will take retribution.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” How will there be for them a reminder [at that time]? And there had come to them a clear Messenger. Then they turned away from him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and said, “[He was] taught [and is] a madman.” Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you will return [to disobedience]. The Day We will strike with the greatest assault, indeed, We will take retribution.”***

The one who behaves in such a manner and avoids sincerely obeying and following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will not prepare adequately for the Day of Judgement.

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.

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” How will there be for them a reminder [at that time]? And there had come to them a clear Messenger. Then they turned away from him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and said, “[He was] taught [and is] a madman.” Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you will return [to disobedience]. The Day We will strike with the greatest assault, indeed, We will take retribution.”***

The one who behaves in such a manner and avoids sincerely obeying and following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will not prepare adequately for the Day of Judgement.

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.

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” How will there be for them a reminder [at that time]? And there had come to them a clear Messenger. Then they turned away from him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and said, “[He was] taught [and is] a madman.” Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you will return [to disobedience]. The Day We will strike with the greatest assault, indeed, We will take retribution.”***

The one who behaves in such a manner and avoids sincerely obeying and following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will not prepare adequately for the Day of Judgement.

The Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation on the Day of Judgment. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864.

This will cause people to sweat according to the deeds they performed during their lives on Earth. Some people's sweat will reach up to their ankles, some their knees and for others it will reach their mouths.

One only needs to ponder over the times they were subjected to intense summer weather and how the heat affected their attitude and behaviour. Through this one can imagine how difficult the situation on Judgment Day will be when the Sun is brought so close to them. This shows that

those who strive hard and exert sincere efforts in the obedience 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, will find relaxation on Judgment Day. But those who were lazy and relaxed during their lives on Earth will be subjected to great stress on Judgment Day. Simply put, the one who strives here will relax there but the one who relaxes here will strive there in difficulty.

The same way people strive hard in this material world so that they obtain a comfortable life and even a comfortable retirement, even though reaching this retirement age is not guaranteed, muslims should strive even harder in this world by obeying Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life so that they can obtain peace and comfort on a day that is guaranteed to occur. It is a sign of great ignorance to strive for a day one may never reach namely, the day of retirement, and not strive for a day they are guaranteed to reach and experience namely, Judgment Day.

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” How will there be for them a reminder [at that time]? And there had come to them a clear Messenger. Then they turned away from him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and said, “[He was] taught [and is] a madman.” Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you will return [to disobedience]. The Day We will strike with the greatest assault, indeed, We will take retribution.”***

The one who behaves in such a manner and avoids sincerely obeying and following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will not prepare adequately for the Day of Judgement.

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.”*

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” How will there be for them a reminder [at that time]? And there had come to them a clear Messenger. Then they turned away from him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and said, “[He was] taught [and is] a madman.” Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you will return [to disobedience]. The Day We will strike with the greatest assault, indeed, We will take retribution.”***

The one who behaves in such a manner and avoids sincerely obeying and following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will not prepare adequately for the Day of Judgement.

People will be commanded to cross the Bridge which will be placed over Hell on the Day of Judgment. This has been discussed extensively in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6573. It warns that extremely large hooks will be on the Bridge which will affect people according to their deeds. Some will be flung into Hell by them, some will be subjected to great torture before they cross the Bridge, others will only face minimal injury from them and finally the righteous will not be harmed by them. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 455, warns that the Bridge is narrower than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword.

The important thing to learn from this is that each person will cross the Bridge according to their deeds. So it is important for muslims not to neglect any duties if they desire to cross the Bridge safely. They must

fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. These include duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. One should not neglect this and simply hope they will magically cross the Bridge unaffected.

In addition, the ease at which a person will cross this Bridge will be a mirror of how much they remained steadfast on the straight path of Islam in this world. This straight path is the path 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...”*

Anyone who abandons this path will not successfully cross this Bridge. Simply put, the more one remains steadfast on the straight path in this world the easier they will cross the Bridge over Hell on Judgment Day. The straight path has been made clear in this world so muslims are left with no excuses from following it thereby ensuring they safely cross the Bridge on Judgment Day.

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” How will there be for them a reminder [at that time]? And there had come to them a clear Messenger. Then they turned away from him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and said, “[He was] taught [and is] a madman.” Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you will return [to disobedience]. The Day We will strike with the greatest assault, indeed, We will take retribution.”***

The one who behaves in such a manner and avoids sincerely obeying and following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will not prepare adequately for the Day of Judgement.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who

believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. [The non-muslims of Mecca will say], “Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.” How will there be for them a reminder [at that time]? And there had come to them a clear Messenger. Then they turned away from him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and said, “[He was] taught [and is] a madman.” Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you will return [to disobedience]. The Day We will strike with the greatest assault, indeed, We will take retribution.”***

In respect to the non-muslims of Mecca, these set of verses could be referring to the famine they were subjected to as a punishment for their persistent disobedience. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3254.

When the violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca escalated further against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, Allah, the Exalted, subjected them to a severe famine. It was so bad that they were forced to eat carrion, leather and bones. Some of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, stating that his claim was a mission of mercy for mankind so he should therefore pray for this famine to be removed from them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did pray for this and Mecca was blessed with profuse rain and the effects of the famine were removed. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 59-60.

And the greatest assault could be referring to the Battle of Badr, the day they were heavily defeated.

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After the battle was over and the non-Muslims were defeated the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered the bodies of the non-Muslims to be placed in an old well. After this was done he called out to them enumerating those in the well and asked if they had found what Allah, the Exalted, promised them as he was given exactly what Allah, the Exalted, promised him. When he was questioned about calling out to the dead he replied that they could hear his words but they could not reply. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 300.

Chapter 44 – Ad Dukhan, Verses 17-22

﴿ وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَجَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴾

﴿ أَنْ أَدُّوا إِلَيَّ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴾

﴿ وَأَنْ لَا تَعْلُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي آتِيكُمْ بِسُلْطَنِ مُبِينٍ ﴾

﴿ وَإِنِّي عُدْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ أَنْ تَرْجُمُونِ ﴾

﴿ وَإِنْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا لِي فَأَعَزِّلُونِ ﴾

﴿ فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنْ هَتُولَاءِ قَوْمٌ مُجْرِمُونَ ﴾

*“And We had already tried before them the people of Pharaoh, and there came to them a noble messenger [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him].*

*[Saying], "Render to me the servants of Allah. Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy messenger.*

*And [saying], "Be not haughty with Allah. Indeed, I have come to you with clear evidence.*

*And indeed, I have sought refuge in my Lord and your Lord, lest you stone me.*

*But if you do not believe me, then leave me alone.*

*And [finally] he called to his Lord that these were a criminal people.”*

***“And We had already tried before them the people of Pharaoh...”***

The overall test of this world has always been the same in every generation namely, whether one will use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, or not.

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 We had already tried before them the people of Pharaoh...”***

The overall test of this world has always been the same in every generation namely, whether one will use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, or not. 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 We had already tried before them the people of Pharaoh, and there came to them a noble messenger [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him].”***

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is for them to be sincerely obeyed and followed. 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 We had already tried before them the people of Pharaoh, and there came to them a noble messenger [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him]. [Saying], "Render to me the servants of Allāh [the enslaved children of Israel]. Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy messenger.””***

In order to correctly spread the word of Islam one must be trustworthy. The Holy Quran specifically mentions how the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them all, declared that they were trustworthy and only desired the benefit of others. For example, Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 161-162:

*“When their brother Lot said to them, "Will you not fear Allah? Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy messenger.”*

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, announced Prophethood the people all agreed that he was trustworthy even though many went back on their own words and denied him. This is mentioned in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 10, Pages 622-623.

***“And We had already tried before them the people of Pharaoh, and there came to them a noble messenger [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him]. [Saying], "Render to me the servants of Allāh [the enslaved children of Israel]. Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy messenger.””***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that betraying trusts is an aspect of hypocrisy.

This includes all the trusts one possesses from Allah, the Exalted, and people. Every blessing one possesses has been entrusted to them by Allah, the Exalted. The only way to fulfill these trusts is by using the blessings in the way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they gain further blessings as this is true gratitude. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

The trusts between people are important to fulfill also. The one who has been entrusted with someone else's belongings should not misuse them and only use them according to the wishes of the owner. One of the greatest trusts between people is keeping conversations secret unless

there is some obvious benefit in informing others. Unfortunately, this is often overlooked amongst muslims.

***“And We had already tried before them the people of Pharaoh, and there came to them a noble messenger [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him]. [Saying], "...Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy messenger," And [saying], "Be not haughty with Allāh. Indeed, I have come to you with clear evidence.””***

As the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was raised in the Pharaoh's palace, Pharaoh and the senior members of his government were fully aware of his unparalleled integrity and honesty. In addition, as they were educated people they full-well knew that his behaviour did not match the behaviour of someone affected by magic. They were also aware that the miracles the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, demonstrated was not magic.

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 We had already tried before them the people of Pharaoh, and there came to them a noble messenger [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him]. [Saying], “...And indeed, I have sought refuge in my Lord and your Lord, lest you stone me.””***

The root of gaining refuge in Allah, the Exalted, is sincerely obeying Him.

This event teaches muslims that whenever they encounter a difficult situation they should remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, trusting that He will provide them a way out of it even if this seems impossible at the time just like He done for the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, and his nation. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

*“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”*

A muslim should understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best for His servants even if the wisdoms behind the difficulty are not obvious. It is a person's reaction which either leads to blessings or the anger of Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to reflect on the countless examples in their own life where they believed something was bad only to change their mind later on and vice versa. This is just like when a person takes a bitter medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. Even though the medicine is bitter they still take it believing it will benefit them. It is strange how a muslim can trust a doctor whose knowledge is limited and who is not absolutely certain

the bitter medicine will benefit them and fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge is infinite and when He only decrees the best for His servants.

A muslim should understand the difference between wishful thinking and trust in Allah, the Exalted. The person who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, and then expects Him to help them in difficulties is a wishful thinker. The one who will gain the help of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated in this great event, is the one who sincerely strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience and then trusts His judgment without complaining or questioning His choice.

***“And We had already tried before them the people of Pharaoh, and there came to them a noble messenger [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him]. [Saying], “...But if you do not believe me, then leave me alone.””***

It is important for muslims to understand an important point in respect to advising others. It is the duty of muslims to advise others towards good and forbid evil but a muslim should not behave as if they have been put in charge as controllers over others. This attitude only leads to anger and bitterness especially, when others do not follow their advice. It is best for muslims to discharge their duty by advising others but they should avoid stressing over the outcome of their advice meaning, whether the person acts on their advice or not. If Allah, the Exalted, advised the greatest teacher and guide of mankind namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to stress over the outcome in many places of the Holy Quran how can a muslim claim or behave as if they have been put in charge of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

*“So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”*

The muslim who behaves as a controller will not only become bitter when people fail to follow their advice but it can lead them to giving up advising others which is a duty on all muslims according to their ability.

In addition, this attitude will also cause muslims to neglect themselves and their own duties as they are too busy concerning themselves with the duties of others. Therefore, muslims should remain firm in commanding good and forbidding evil but refrain from observing and bothering about the outcome of their advice.

***“And We had already tried before them the people of Pharaoh, and there came to them a noble messenger [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him]. [Saying], “...But if you do not believe me, then leave me alone.” And [finally] he called to his Lord that these were a criminal people.”***

Muslims often claim that as they are very busy in their worldly activities they find it difficult to do voluntary righteous deeds especially, those related to people, such as physically supporting someone. Even though muslims should strive to perform as much voluntary righteous deeds as possible as it will benefit them in both worlds whereas, their worldly activities will only benefit them in this world none the less, the least these muslims should do is adopt a neutral mentality towards others. This means that if a muslim cannot help others they should not hinder them in their lawful and good activities. If they cannot make others happy they should not make them sad. If they cannot make others laugh they should not make them cry. This can be applied to countless scenarios. This is important to understand as many muslims might do good to others, such as provide them emotional support, but at the same time they destroy their good deeds by being negative towards people. It is important to note, if a muslim is excessive in being negative towards others it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Having a neutral mentality is actually a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250.

To conclude, it is best to treat others in a positive way which is a sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. But if they cannot do this the least they should do is treat others in a neutral

way. As treating others in a negative way may well lead to one's destruction.

***“And We had already tried before them the people of Pharaoh, and there came to them a noble messenger [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him]. [Saying], "...And [finally] he called to his Lord that these were a criminal people.””***

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 44 – Ad Dukhan, Verses 23-29

فَأَسْرِ بِعِبَادِي لَيْلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُتَّبِعُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

وَأَتْرِكِ الْبَحْرَ رَهْوًا إِنَّهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُّغْرَقُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

كَمْ تَرَكُوا مِنْ جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

وَزُرُوعٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿٢٦﴾

وَنَعْمَةً كَانُوا فِيهَا فَكَاهِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

كَذَلِكَ <sup>ط</sup> وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا قَوْمًا ءَاخِرِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنظَرِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

*"[Allah said], "Then set out with My servants by night. Indeed, you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] are to be pursued.*

*And leave the sea in stillness. Indeed, they are an army to be drowned."*

*How much they left behind of gardens and springs.*

*And crops and noble sites.*

*And comfort wherein they were amused.*

*Thus. And We caused to inherit it another people.*

*And the heaven and earth wept not for them, nor were they reprieved."*

***“[Allah said], "Then set out with My servants by night. Indeed, you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] are to be pursued.””***

This verse reminds muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant muslim will have no weapon to defend himself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“[Allah said], "Then set out with My servants by night. Indeed, you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] are to be pursued. And leave the sea in stillness. Indeed, they are an army to be drowned.””***

This event teaches muslims that whenever they encounter a difficult situation they should remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, trusting that He will provide them a way out of it even if this seems impossible at the time just like He done for the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, and his nation. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

*“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”*

A muslim should understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best for His servants even if the wisdoms behind the difficulty are not obvious. It is a person's reaction which either leads to blessings or the anger of Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to reflect on the countless examples in their own life where they believed something was bad only to change their mind later on and vice versa. This is just like when a person takes a bitter medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. Even though the medicine is bitter they still take it believing it will benefit them. It is strange how a muslim can trust a doctor whose knowledge is limited and who is not absolutely certain the bitter medicine will benefit them and fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge is infinite and when He only decrees the best for His servants.

A muslim should understand the difference between wishful thinking and trust in Allah, the Exalted. The person who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, and then expects Him to help them in difficulties is a wishful thinker. The one who will gain the help of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated in this great event, is the one who sincerely strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience and then trusts His judgment without complaining or questioning His choice.

***“[Allah said], “Then set out with My servants by night. Indeed, you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] are to be pursued. And leave the sea in stillness. Indeed, they are an army to be drowned.”...And the heaven and earth wept not for them, nor were they reprieved.”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work

and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“[Allah said], "Then set out with My servants by night. Indeed, you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] are to be pursued. And leave the sea in stillness. Indeed, they are an army to be drowned."...And the heaven and earth wept not for them, nor were they reprieved.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be

thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“[Allah said], "Then set out with My servants by night. Indeed, you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] are to be pursued. And leave the sea in stillness. Indeed, they are an army to be drowned.”...And the heaven and earth wept not for them, nor were they reprieved.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“[Allah said], "Then set out with My servants by night. Indeed, you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] are to be pursued. And leave the sea in stillness. Indeed, they are an army to be drowned.”...And the heaven and earth wept not for them, nor were they reprieved.”***

The final part of these verses indicate that as they did not perform good deeds nor leave good and beneficial things behind they would not be missed or appreciated by anyone.

First of all, 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. Islam not only teaches muslims to send blessings ahead of them to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds but it also teaches them to leave a lovely legacy behind from which people can benefit from. In fact, when a muslim passes away and leaves behind anything which is useful, such as an ongoing charity in the form of a water well they will be rewarded for it. This is confirmed in Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4223. So a muslim should strive to perform righteous deeds and send forward as much good as possible but they should also try leaving a good legacy behind which will benefit them after they pass away.

Unfortunately, many muslims are so concerned about their wealth and properties that they only end up leaving them behind which does not benefit them in the least. Each muslim should not be fooled into believing

they have plenty of time for creating a legacy for themselves as the moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly. Today is the day a muslim should truly reflect on the legacy they will leave behind. If this legacy is good and beneficial they should praise Allah, the Exalted, for granting them the strength to do so. But if it is something which will not benefit them then they should prepare something which will so that they not only send forward good to the hereafter but also leave good behind. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. So each muslim should ask themselves what is their legacy?

***“[Allah said], "Then set out with My servants by night. Indeed, you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] are to be pursued. And leave the sea in stillness. Indeed, they are an army to be drowned.”...And the heaven and earth wept not for them, nor were they reprieved.”***

The final part of these verses indicate that as they did not perform good deeds nor leave good and beneficial things behind they would not be missed or appreciated by anyone.

It is important for muslims to understand that when they treat others kindly it in reality, benefits themselves and not others. This is because treating others kindly has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted, and fulfilling this important duty gains one reward.

In addition, when one is kind to others they will supplicate for them while they are alive which will benefit them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6929, that a supplication done for a person in secret is always answered.

In addition, the people will supplicate for them after they pass away which is definitely answered as it has been recorded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 10:

*“...saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith..."*

Finally, a person who treated others kindly will gain their intercession on the Day of Judgment, which is a day people will be desperate for the intercession of others. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7439.

But those who mistreat others even if they fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, will miss out on the benefits mentioned earlier. And on Judgment Day they will find that Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive them until their victim forgives them first. If they choose not to then the oppressor's good deeds will be given to their victim and if needed the victim's sins will be given to their oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Therefore, a muslim should be kind to themselves by being kind to others as in reality they are only benefiting themselves in this world and the next. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 6:

*“And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself...”*

***“...Indeed, they are an army to be drowned.” How much they left behind of gardens and springs. And crops and noble sites. And comfort wherein they were amused.”***

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*“...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying],  
"Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a  
thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.””*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“...Indeed, they are an army to be drowned.” How much they left behind of gardens and springs. And crops and noble sites. And comfort wherein they were amused.”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6442, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person's true wealth is what they send ahead to the hereafter whereas, what they leave behind is in reality the wealth of their inheritors.

It is important for muslims to send as many blessings, such as their wealth, as they can to the hereafter by using them in ways which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This includes spending on one's needs and the needs of their dependents without being wasteful, excessive or extravagant. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006.

But if a muslim does not use their blessings correctly they will become a burden for them in both worlds. And if they hoard them and leave them behind for their inheritors then they will be held accountable for obtaining them even though others will enjoy them after they depart. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379.

In addition, if their inheritors use the blessings correctly then they will obtain reward from Allah, the Exalted, while the one who collected it will be left empty handed on Judgment Day. Or their inheritor will misuse the

blessings which will become a great regret for both the one who earned the blessing and their inheritor especially, if they did not teach their inheritor, such as their child, how to correctly use the blessings as this is a duty on them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

Muslims should therefore fulfill their responsibilities towards Allah, the Exalted, and people and ensure they take the rest of their blessings with them to the hereafter by using them correctly as prescribed by Islam. Otherwise, they will be left empty handed and full of regrets on Judgment Day.

***“...Indeed, they are an army to be drowned.” How much they left behind of gardens and springs. And crops and noble sites. And comfort wherein they were amused.”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7420, the Holy prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the only wealth one truly possesses is connected to three things.

The first is what a person spends of their wealth on obtaining and consuming food. A muslim should spend reasonably on food without excessiveness, waste or extravagance as this can be considered a sin. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 31:

*“...and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.”*

It is vital for muslims to only consume the lawful as one's supplication is rejected if they consume the unlawful according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2346. If one's supplication is rejected how can the rest of their actions possibly be accepted by Allah, the Exalted?

The next thing one spends their true wealth on is on their clothes. Again, a muslim should avoid extravagance and wasting as these people have been labeled the siblings of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 27:

*“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils...”*

A muslim should be pleased with nice, clean and simple clothing as this is an aspect of faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118.

The final wealth a person truly owns is what they send ahead to the hereafter by spending in ways which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This includes spending on one's necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance.

To conclude, a muslim should remember that the first two things have already been guaranteed by Allah, the Exalted, as they are a part of their provision which cannot change and was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Therefore, they should focus their efforts on the last aspect. All other forms of obtaining and using wealth in reality, does not belong to a person and will be left behind

for others to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it on Judgment Day.

***“...Indeed, they are an army to be drowned.” How much they left behind of gardens and springs. And crops and noble sites. And comfort wherein they were amused. Thus. And We caused to inherit it another people.”***

These verses remind muslims of the very important position they have been appointed to by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the ambassadors of Islam. It is extremely important for muslims to fulfil this duty according to their potential. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many muslims today believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A muslim should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

In addition, this important position should remind muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on

Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted, become angry with the muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

***“...Indeed, they are an army to be drowned.” How much they left behind of gardens and springs. And crops and noble sites. And comfort wherein they were amused. Thus. And We caused to inherit it another people.”***

One must realize that if they misuse the blessings they have been granted then these very blessings will become a curse for them in both worlds, just like it did for those who came before 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.

***“...Indeed, they are an army to be drowned.” How much they left behind of gardens and springs. And crops and noble sites. And comfort wherein they were amused. Thus. And We caused to inherit it another people.”***

One must realize that if they misuse the blessings they have been granted then these very blessings will become a curse for them in both worlds, just like it did for those who came before them. 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.

Chapter 44 – Ad Dukhan, Verses 30-33

﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ نَجَّيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ

﴿٣١﴾ مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيًّا مِّنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ اخْتَرْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عَلَىٰ الْعَالَمِينَ

﴿٣٣﴾ وَءَايَيْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الْآيَاتِ مَا فِيهِ بَلَاءٌ مُّبِينٌ

*“And We certainly saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating torment.*

*From Pharaoh. Indeed, he was a haughty one among the transgressors.*

*And We certainly chose them by knowledge over [all] the worlds.*

*And We gave them of signs that in which there was a clear trial.”*

***“And We certainly saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating torment.”***

This event teaches muslims that whenever they encounter a difficult situation they should remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, trusting that He will provide them a way out of it even if this seems impossible at the time just like He done for the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, and his nation. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

*“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”*

A muslim should understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best for His servants even if the wisdoms behind the difficulty are not obvious. It is a person's reaction which either leads to blessings or the anger of Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to reflect on the countless examples in their own life where they believed something was bad only to change their mind later on and vice versa. This is just like when a person takes a bitter medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. Even though the medicine is bitter they still take it believing it will benefit them. It is strange how a muslim can trust a doctor whose knowledge is limited and who is not absolutely certain the bitter medicine will benefit them and fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge is infinite and when He only decrees the best for His servants.

A muslim should understand the difference between wishful thinking and trust in Allah, the Exalted. The person who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, and then expects Him to help them in difficulties is a wishful thinker. The one who will gain the help of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated in this great event, is the one who sincerely strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience and then trusts His judgment without complaining or questioning His choice.

***“And We certainly saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating torment. From Pharaoh. Indeed, he was a haughty one among the transgressors.”***

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 We certainly saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating torment. From Pharaoh. Indeed, he was a haughty one among the transgressors.”***

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.

***“And We certainly saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating torment. From Pharaoh...And We certainly chose them by knowledge over [all] the worlds.”***

These verses remind muslims of the very important position they have been appointed to by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the ambassadors of Islam. It is extremely important for muslims to fulfil this duty according to their potential. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many muslims today believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A muslim should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

In addition, this important position should remind muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat

and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted, become angry with the muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

***“And We certainly saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating torment. From Pharaoh...And We gave them of signs that in which there was a clear trial.”***

One of the tests one faces when they are granted the signs of Allah, the Exalted, is whether they will sincerely obey and follow these signs or not.

In this age, the two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, are the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A muslim should not strive against them by disobeying them.

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

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is

the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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 We certainly saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating torment. From Pharaoh...And We gave them of signs that in which there was a clear trial.”***

One of the tests one faces when they are granted the signs of Allah, the Exalted, is whether they will show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, for them.

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.

***“And We certainly saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating torment. From Pharaoh...And We gave them of signs that in which there was a clear trial.”***

It is important to note, ignorance prevents one from recognising the signs of Allah, the Exalted.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“And We certainly saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating torment. From Pharaoh...And We gave them of signs that in which there was a clear trial.”***

It is important to note, ignorance prevents one from recognising the signs of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“And We certainly saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating torment. From Pharaoh...And We gave them of signs that in which there was a clear trial.”***

The trial included them facing times of ease after difficulty.

Muslims often increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, such as attending the Mosques for the congregational prayers or reciting more spiritual exercises in times of difficulty. But in times of ease they often relax and become lazy. But it is important to note, that generally it is more important to be more on guard and increase one's obedience during times of ease than times of difficulty. This is because one often sins more during times of ease than difficulty, such as abandoning their obligatory duties. If one reviews the different misguided people in history, such as Pharaoh and Quroon they will observe that their sins only multiplied during times of ease. Someone who is facing a difficulty where they are stuck and have no option but to patiently wait for relief is less likely to sin as they desire to be relieved of their difficulty. Whereas, a person experiencing times of ease will be in a better position to enjoy and over indulge in worldly things which often leads to sins. For example, a person facing poverty is less likely to sin as many sins require wealth. Whereas, a wealthy person is in an easier position to commit those sins, such as purchasing alcohol or drugs. Therefore, muslims should take note of this and ensure they maintain or even increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, during times of ease so that they do not fall into sins and disobedience.

In addition, the one who is obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands and refraining from His prohibitions during times of ease will gain the support of Allah, the Exalted, during their times of difficulty which will aid them to overcome them successfully. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

*“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”*

## Chapter 44 – Ad Dukhan, Verses 34-36

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَيَقُولُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا مَوْتَتُنَا الْأُولَىٰ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُنشَرِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

فَأْتُوا بِآبَائِنَا إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

*“Indeed, these are saying.*

*[They say] “There is not but our first death, and we will not be resurrected.*

*Then bring [back] our forefathers, if you should be truthful.”*”

***“Indeed, these are saying.”***

The fact that Allah, the Exalted, revealed verses in the Holy Quran as a response to people’s speech indicates that one should not take their words lightly.

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.

***“Indeed, these are saying. [They say] “There is not but our first death, and we will not be resurrected.””***

It is important to note, that one can adopt this mentality even if they believe in the Day of Judgement. This occurs when one fails to practically show their belief in the Day of Judgement by preparing for it. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“Indeed, these are saying. [They say] “There is not but our first death, and we will not be resurrected.””***

It is important to note, that one can adopt this mentality even if they believe in the Day of Judgement. This occurs when one fails to practically show their belief in the Day of Judgement by preparing for it. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“Indeed, these are saying. [They say] “There is not but our first death, and we will not be resurrected.””***

It is important to note, that one can adopt this mentality even if they believe in the Day of Judgement. This occurs when one fails to practically show their belief in the Day of Judgement by preparing for it. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the

body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“Indeed, these are saying. [They say] “There is not but our first death, and we will not be resurrected. Then bring [back] our forefathers, if you should be truthful.””***

This was a foolish demand the non-muslims of Mecca made to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as witnessing the resurrection of a dead person must remain unseen until the Day of Judgement otherwise belief in something which is apparent holds little value. This is why the acceptance of belief will not benefit a person when they observe the Angel of Death or on Judgement Day as the unseen has now become seen to them. In addition, just because something has not occurred then and there does not mean it will not happen later on.

The non-muslims of Mecca actually understood this truth yet uttered statements like this in order to misguide their ignorant followers and prevent them from accepting Islam.

The non-Muslims of Mecca spent their lives with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and full-well knew he was no liar. As they were masters of the Arabic language they full-well knew that the Holy Quran was not the words of a man.

For example, one of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, Walid Bin Mughira, once held a meeting with the other non-Muslim leaders of Mecca during the

time of the Holy Pilgrimage. The Holy Pilgrimage did exist before the coming of Islam but the correct practices of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been completely changed. He advised the other leaders that soon many people would enter Mecca because of the Holy Pilgrimage and they will come across the message of Islam so they needed to unanimously agree on what to say about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to deter people from accepting Islam. Someone advised that they should label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a soothsayer. But Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not a soothsayer as he did not possess any of their crazy characteristics therefore people would not accept this. Another advised that they should tell people the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was crazy and was possessed by evil spirits. But Walid replied that it was obvious this was not true as these signs were not apparent in him. Finally, someone advised to label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a poet so that people would not pay attention to what he says. But again Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Quran or his speech were not poetry as the Arabs were masters of poetry. Walid advised everyone to claim that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a sorcerer whose goals were to cause separation between people and their religion and divisions within families. After agreeing to this plan they dispersed and waited for people to flood into Mecca for the Holy Pilgrimage and warned them not to pay attention to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they claimed he was a sorcerer. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 362.

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun.

If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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 44 – Ad Dukhan, Verse 37

أَهْمٌ خَيْرٌ أَمْ قَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ  
كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

*“Are they better or the people of Tubba and those before them? We destroyed them, [for] indeed, they were criminals.”*

***“Are they better or the people of Tubba and those before them? We destroyed them, [for] indeed, they were criminals.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“Are they better or the people of Tubba and those before them? We destroyed them, [for] indeed, they were criminals.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and

religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“Are they better or the people of Tubba and those before them? We destroyed them, [for] indeed, they were criminals.”***

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.

***“Are they better or the people of Tubba and those before them? We destroyed them, [for] indeed, they were criminals.”***

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*“...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying],  
"Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a  
thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.””*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

## Chapter 44 – Ad Dukhan, Verses 38-42

﴿٣٨﴾ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَإِعِينِ

مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

﴿٤٠﴾ إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ مِيقَتُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

﴿٤١﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي مَوْلَى عَنْ مَوْلَى شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

﴿٤٢﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

*“And We did not create the heavens and earth and that between them in play.*

*We did not create them except in truth [purpose], but most of them do not know.*

*Indeed, the Day of Judgement is the appointed time for them all.*

*The Day when no relation will avail a relation at all, nor will they be helped.*

*Except those on whom Allah has mercy [will intercede for each other].*

*Indeed, He is the Exalted in Might, the Merciful.”*

***“And We did not create the heavens and earth and that between them in play. We did not create them except in truth [purpose], but most of them do not know. Indeed, the Day of Judgement is the appointed time for them all.”***

The Holy Quran clearly declared the purpose of mankind in chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

*“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”*

Before one can worship Allah, the Exalted, they must first recognise Him as it is not possible to obey someone without knowledge. In addition, people must first learn how to worship Allah, the Exalted, before they can fulfil this task. Therefore, worship is followed by knowledge. This is why in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared seeking useful knowledge a duty on all muslims. Without knowledge one will never be able to worship Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Few good deeds performed with knowledge are far superior to many good deeds performed incorrectly because of ignorance.

As Allah, the Exalted, is the One who created mankind no one has the right to be served and worshipped except Him. If an employer easily dismisses their employee for abandoning the duty they have been hired for, how can

it be correct to abandon serving and worshipping Allah, the Exalted, when He alone created and sustains the creation? All of mankind have been granted free will and the ability to obey and worship Allah, the Exalted. So each person must decide whether they desire to fulfil their purpose of creation thereby receiving eternal reward or reject it and face punishment in both worlds. The same way a device, such as a mobile phone, which does not fulfil its primary purpose is discarded people may well be discarded on the Day of Judgement into Hell for failing to fulfil their primary purpose of existence.

It is important to note, that worship refers to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves 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. This obedience must encompass every part of one's life and body, such as their tongue. It includes a person's duty towards Allah, the Exalted, such as offering the prayer and treating the creation with kindness.

Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will be given the best rewards while those who disobey Him will receive the worst punishment in this world and the next. In a divine Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2466, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, narrates from Allah, the Exalted, who declares that if one busies themselves in worshipping Him, through sincere obedience, He will fill their heart with richness and remove their poverty. But if they turn away from His worship and obedience Allah, the Exalted, will fill their life with problems and not remove their poverty.

It is important to note, that Allah, the Exalted, does not need the creation in anyway whatsoever. As clearly mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6572, people only benefit themselves with their good deeds as it raises their ranks. And they only harm themselves with their sins as they will be held accountable for them. The infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, does not change at all irrespective of if the entire creation worshipped Him or not. Allah, the Exalted, is the sole Creator and sole Provider. It is people who are completely and utterly in need of Him. Whoever understands this and sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the purpose of their creation and will therefore be given an eternal reward.

***“And We did not create the heavens and earth and that between them in play. We did not create them except in truth [purpose], but most of them do not know. Indeed, the Day of Judgement is the appointed time for them all.”***

A person who experiences a midlife crisis often questions their purpose and seems to feel a huge void in their life even though they may possess many things and achieved much worldly success. This often occurs as these people are not fulfilling the purpose of their creation which is to gain knowledge about Allah, the Exalted, so that they can obey and worship Him correctly. This is similar to a person who owns the latest mobile phone which has many features yet, due to a fault it fails to fulfil its primary goal which is to make phone calls. No matter how good these other features are the owner will always feel a void in respect to it as the phone does not fulfil its primary goal of existence. Similarly, a person will feel a void in their life even if they possess many worldly things. This feeling affects muslims and non-muslims. It is obvious why non-muslims feel like this as they could not be further from fulfilling the purpose of their creation so no matter what they achieve they eventually feel this void in their life. It occurs to those muslims who may even fulfil their obligatory duties but as they fail to strive to gain and act on the vital knowledge needed to fulfil their purpose correctly they experience this void. In most cases, they do not even understand the Arabic language so performing worship simply does not fill this void. One will not fill this void until they strive to fulfil the purpose of creation which is to gain knowledge on Allah, the Exalted, so that they can obey and worship Him correctly throughout every moment of their life.

***“And We did not create the heavens and earth and that between them in play. We did not create them except in truth [purpose], but most of them do not know. Indeed, the Day of Judgement is the appointed time for them all.”***

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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.

***“Indeed, the Day of Judgement is the appointed time for them all.”***

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.

***“Indeed, the Day of Judgement is the appointed time for them all.”***

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.

***“Indeed, the Day of Judgement is the appointed time for them all.”***

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.

***“Indeed, the Day of Judgement is the appointed time for them all.”***

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.

***“Indeed, the Day of Judgement is the appointed time for them all.”***

The Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation on the Day of Judgment. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864.

This will cause people to sweat according to the deeds they performed during their lives on Earth. Some people's sweat will reach up to their ankles, some their knees and for others it will reach their mouths.

One only needs to ponder over the times they were subjected to intense summer weather and how the heat affected their attitude and behaviour. Through this one can imagine how difficult the situation on Judgment Day will be when the Sun is brought so close to them. This shows that those who strive hard and exert sincere efforts in the obedience 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, will find relaxation on Judgment Day. But those who were lazy and relaxed during their lives on Earth will be subjected to great stress on Judgment Day. Simply put, the one who strives here will relax there but the one who relaxes here will strive there in difficulty.

The same way people strive hard in this material world so that they obtain a comfortable life and even a comfortable retirement, even though reaching this retirement age is not guaranteed, muslims should strive even harder in this world by obeying Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of

their life so that they can obtain peace and comfort on a day that is guaranteed to occur. It is a sign of great ignorance to strive for a day one may never reach namely, the day of retirement, and not strive for a day they are guaranteed to reach and experience namely, Judgment Day.

***“Indeed, the Day of Judgement is the appointed time for them all.”***

People will be commanded to cross the Bridge which will be placed over Hell on the Day of Judgment. This has been discussed extensively in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6573. It warns that extremely large hooks will be on the Bridge which will affect people according to their deeds. Some will be flung into Hell by them, some will be subjected to great torture before they cross the Bridge, others will only face minimal injury from them and finally the righteous will not be harmed by them. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 455, warns that the Bridge is narrower than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword.

The important thing to learn from this is that each person will cross the Bridge according to their deeds. So it is important for Muslims not to neglect any duties if they desire to cross the Bridge safely. They must fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. These include duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. One should not neglect this and simply hope they will magically cross the Bridge unaffected.

In addition, the ease at which a person will cross this Bridge will be a mirror of how much they remained steadfast on the straight path of Islam in this world. This straight path is the path 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...”*

Anyone who abandons this path will not successfully cross this Bridge. Simply put, the more one remains steadfast on the straight path in this world the easier they will cross the Bridge over Hell on Judgment Day. The straight path has been made clear in this world so muslims are left with no excuses from following it thereby ensuring they safely cross the Bridge on Judgment Day.

***“Indeed, the Day of Judgement is the appointed time for them all.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2559, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Paradise is surrounded by hardships and Hell is surrounded by desires.

This means the path which leads to Paradise contains difficulties and hardships. In most cases, a person cannot obtain good in this world without going through some sort of difficulty, such as exerting one's energy, then how can one believe they can obtain Paradise without facing difficulties? If one turns the pages of history they will observe the righteous always faced difficulties but as they knew the path of Paradise contained difficulties they maintained their focus on the destination instead of the difficulties. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that no one had been tested more than him in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472. Therefore, muslims must realize a fact that facing some difficulties in this world is an extremely small price to pay to obtain the permanent bliss of Paradise. Therefore, they should remain patient through all difficulties while focusing on the destination.

The path to Hell is full of desires. This indicates the importance of maintaining one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, at all times by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Even though it is not unlawful to enjoy lawful pleasures in this world a muslim should minimize these as much as possible as these lawful desires often lead to unlawful desires. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who behaves in such a manner will safe guard their faith and honor. A muslim should

never obey their desires or the desires of others if it means they will disobey Allah, the Exalted, as the pleasure of fulfilling desires vanishes quickly whereas the regret and the potential punishment will last long.

To conclude, a desire fulfilled will not make one feel better if they end up in Hell. And a difficulty one faces will not make them feel bad if they end up in Paradise.

***“Indeed, the Day of Judgement is the appointed time for them all. The Day when no relation will avail a relation at all, nor will they be helped. Except those [believers] on whom Allāh has mercy...”***

These verses are connected to chapter 80 Abasa, verses 34-37:

*“On the Day a man will flee from his brother. And his mother and his father. And his wife and his children. For every man, that Day, will be a matter adequate for him.”*

This is when each person will flee from their relatives on Judgment Day out of concern for their own wellbeing. It is important for muslims to understand that Islam does not advise them to abandon their relatives as upholding the ties of kinship is an extremely important aspect of Islam. But it encourages them to put everyone in their rightful place within their life. This means that they should fulfil the rights of others without going overboard meaning, without compromising on the duties set by Allah, the Exalted, and following the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Unfortunately, some go too far and abandon these more important duties out of misplaced love and loyalty to their relatives. Some even strive to obtain unlawful provision and commit sins for the sake of pleasing their relatives. This great event clearly shows the downside of doing this. A muslim should always support others especially, their relatives in what is good but never support them in bad things irrespective of how close their bond with them maybe as there is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

In addition, this great event will occur between the people who, in most cases, share a deeper connection than a person does with their friends. So if this is the outcome of relatives on Judgment Day can one imagine the outcome of friends? Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 28:

*“Oh, woe to me! I wish I had not taken that one as a friend.”*

The only way people can truly benefit each other in this world or in the next is when they prioritise the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, over all else and aid each other in this ultimate goal. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

***“Indeed, the Day of Judgement is the appointed time for them all. The Day when no relation will avail a relation at all, nor will they be helped. Except those [believers] on whom Allāh has mercy...”***

Generally speaking, these verses warn against bad companionship as this leads to negative consequences in the hereafter.

Muslims should note that a major sign of true love is when one directs their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is because obedience leads to success and safety in both this world and in the hereafter. A person who does not desire safety and success for a person can never truly love them irrespective of what they claim or how they treat the other person. The same way a person becomes happy when their beloved obtains worldly success, like a job, they will also desire their beloved to obtain success in the hereafter. If a person does not care about another obtaining safety and success especially, in the next world then they do not love them.

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

Therefore, a muslim should assess whether those in their life direct them towards Allah, the Exalted, or not. If they do then it is a clear sign of their love for them. If they do not then it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

***“Indeed, the Day of Judgement is the appointed time for them all. The Day when no relation will avail a relation at all, nor will they be helped. Except those [believers] on whom Allāh has mercy...”***

Generally speaking, these verses warn against bad companionship as this leads to negative consequences in the hereafter.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person who imitates a people is counted as one of them.

All muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly warns that a muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done 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.

But those who verbally declare their love for the righteous and fail to imitate them and instead imitate the characteristics found in hypocrites and the sinful will be considered and judged as one of them. This does not mean they will lose their faith but it means they will be judged as disobedient muslims. How can a disobedient muslim be counted as an

obedient muslim and end up with the righteous? This is only wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 20:

*“Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise. The companions of Paradise - they are the attainers [of success].”*

***“Indeed, the Day of Judgement is the appointed time for them all. The Day when no relation will avail a relation at all, nor will they be helped. Except those [believers] on whom Allāh has mercy...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he is the first person to intercede and the first person whose intercession will be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

A muslim should therefore strive to make themselves worthy of the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by performing the actions which result in this such as supplicating for it after hearing the call to prayer. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 679. But this would require one to regularly attend the obligatory prayers at a Mosque instead of offering them at home. The greatest action which will result in the intercession is learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A muslim should not live in heedlessness by rejecting this duty and then expect intercession on Judgment Day as this is closer to wishful thinking which is blame worthy and of no real value compared to true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

Unfortunately, some muslims who have adopted this wishful thinking expect to obtain Paradise through this intercession even though they do not obey 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. These muslims must realise that even though the intercession is a

fact some muslims who will have their punishment reduced through intercession will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

***“...Indeed, He is the Exalted in Might...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who over powers all things, who in reality is the only One who possesses power and might. Anyone else who possesses strength only does so because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. There is no atom in this world or in the next that can escape the power and authority of Allah, the Exalted.

As all power belongs to Allah, the Exalted, a muslim should therefore always remember that the strength to perform righteous deeds and refrain from sins comes from Allah, the Exalted, alone. This will remove any chance of pride creeping into their heart. An atom’s worth of which is enough to take a person to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Whoever desires for their faith to become mighty must obey the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be granted strong faith which will aid them to overcome all difficulties so that they leave this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. True obedience only lies in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. 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.”*

Truly Knowing Allah, the Exalted, is All Mighty should prevent a muslim from sinning. As they should know there is no way to escape the might of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, when a muslim engraves this divine name into their heart it prevents them from committing oppression and wronging others. They become fully aware that even if there is no person powerful enough to seek justice from them Allah, the Exalted, will certainly take them to account and punish them in both worlds. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, oppression to others may cause the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted, to hurl them into Hell on Judgment Day.

***“...Indeed, He is...the Merciful.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Most Merciful according to His infinite status. This attribute means that Allah, the Exalted, bestows countless favours on the creation and is always extremely kind to them. This same characteristic has been attributed to others such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 128:

*“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you [i.e., your guidance] and to the believers is kind and merciful.”*

When used in reference to the creation merciful means soft-hearted and compassionate. A muslim must adopt these qualities by looking at the creation through the eye of mercy and by treating them with mercy and compassion whether they are obedient or sinful. Many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 6030, indicate that the one who does not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. So it is vital for muslims to show mercy to all through their actions such as financial and physical help and through their words such as supplicating for them. Islam in fact rewards a muslim who shows mercy to all living things such as animals. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550. In addition, the mercy they show should not be selective or occasional instead they should strive to demonstrate mercy at all times with all of creation.

Chapter 44 – Ad Dukhan, Verses 43-50

إِنَّ شَجَرَتَ الزَّقُّومِ ﴿٤٣﴾

طَعَامُ الْأَثِيمِ ﴿٤٤﴾

كَالْمُهْلِ يَغْلِي فِي الْبُطُونِ ﴿٤٥﴾

كَغَلِي الْحَمِيمِ ﴿٤٦﴾

خَذُوهُ فَاَعْتَلُوهُ إِلَى سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٤٧﴾

ثُمَّ صُبُّوا فَوْقَ رَأْسِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْحَمِيمِ ﴿٤٨﴾

ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ ﴿٤٩﴾

إِنَّ هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَمْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

*“Indeed, the tree of zaqqūm [in Hell].*

*Is food for the sinful.*

*Like murky oil, it boils within bellies.*

*Like the boiling of scalding water.*

*[It will be commanded], "Seize him and drag him into the midst of the Hellfire.*

*Then pour over his head from the torment of scalding water.*

*[It will be said sarcastically] Taste! Indeed, you are the honored, the noble!*

*Indeed, this [the hereafter] is what you used to dispute.”*

***“Indeed, the tree of zaqqūm [in Hell]. Is food for the sinful. Like murky oil, it boils within bellies. Like the boiling of scalding water. [It will be commanded], "Seize him and drag him into the midst of the Hellfire. Then pour over his head from the torment of scalding water. [It will be said sarcastically] Taste! Indeed, you are the honored, the noble!””***

In order to avoid this outcome one must understand where true nobility lies and strive to obtain it.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or

wealth. Even though, many muslims have erected these barriers such as social castes and sects thereby believing some are better than others Islam has clearly rejected this concept and declared that in this respect all people are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

***“Indeed, the tree of zaqqūm [in Hell]. Is food for the sinful. Like murky oil, it boils within bellies. Like the boiling of scalding water. [It will be commanded], "Seize him and drag him into the midst of the Hellfire. Then pour over his head from the torment of scalding water. [It will be said sarcastically] Taste! Indeed, you are the honored, the noble!””***

In order to avoid this outcome one must understand where true nobility lies and strive to obtain it.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that nobility does not lie in one's lineage as all people are the descendants of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and he was made of dust. Therefore, people should give up boasting about their relatives and lineage.

It is important to understand that even though some ignorant muslims have adopted the attitude of other nations by creating castes and sects thereby believing some people are superior to others based on these groups Islam declared a simple criterion for superiority namely, piety. Meaning, the more a muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience the greater they are in rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

This verse destroys all other standards which have been created by ignorant people such as one's race, ethnicity, wealth, gender or social status.

In addition, if a muslim is proud of a pious person in their lineage they should correctly demonstrate this belief by praising Allah, the Exalted, and following in their footsteps. Boasting about others without following in their footsteps will not help someone in either this world or the next. This has been made clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2945.

Finally, the one who is proud of others but fails to follow in their footsteps is indirectly dishonoring them as the outside world will observe their bad character and assume their righteous ancestor behaved in the same manner. These people should therefore strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because of this reason. These are like those people who adopt the outward traditions and advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf yet, fail to adopt his inner character. The outside world will only think negatively about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they observe the bad character of these muslims.

***“Indeed, the tree of zaqqūm [in Hell]. Is food for the sinful. Like murky oil, it boils within bellies. Like the boiling of scalding water. [It will be commanded], "Seize him and drag him into the midst of the Hellfire. Then pour over his head from the torment of scalding water. [It will be said sarcastically] Taste! Indeed, you are the honored, the noble!””***

In order to avoid this outcome one must understand where true nobility lies and strive to obtain it.

Greatness and true success is not connected to worldly things, such as wealth or fame. A person may obtain some worldly success through these things but it is quite obvious if one turns the pages of history that this type of success is very temporary and it eventually becomes a burden and regret for a person. A muslim should never believe that superiority lies in these things thereby dedicating themselves to obtaining them while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Nor should they look down at others who do not possess these worldly things believing they have no value or significance as this attitude contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6071, that the people of Paradise are those who are considered insignificant by society and concluded that if they took an oath on something Allah, the Exalted, would fulfil it for them.

True honour, success and greatness in this world and the next only lies in piety. So the more one sincerely strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience

according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the greater they are even if they appear insignificant to society. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore search for true success in this and not waste their time and efforts in searching for it in worldly things otherwise they may well reach the hereafter a great loser. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

*“Say, “Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.””*

***“Indeed, the tree of zaqqūm [in Hell]. Is food for the sinful. Like murky oil, it boils within bellies. Like the boiling of scalding water. [It will be commanded], “Seize him and drag him into the midst of the Hellfire. Then pour over his head from the torment of scalding water. [It will be said sarcastically] Taste! Indeed, you are the honored, the noble!””***

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.

***“Indeed, the tree of zaqqūm [in Hell]. Is food for the sinful. Like murky oil, it boils within bellies. Like the boiling of scalding water. [It will be commanded], “Seize him and drag him into the midst of the Hellfire. Then pour over his head from the torment of scalding water. [It will be said sarcastically] Taste! Indeed, you are the honored, the noble! Indeed, this is what you used to dispute.””***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

Chapter 44 – Ad Dukhan, Verses 51-57

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ ﴿٥١﴾

فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

يَلْبَسُونَ مِنْ سُندُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

كَذَلِكَ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا بِكُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ ءَامِنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْأُولَىٰ ۖ  
وَوَقَّعَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٥٦﴾



فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكَ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

*“Indeed, the righteous will be in a secure place.*

*Within gardens and springs.*

*Wearing [garments of] fine silk and brocade, facing each other.*

*Thus. And We will marry them to fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes.*

*They will call therein for every [kind of] fruit - safe and secure.*

*They will not taste death therein except the first death, and He will have protected them from the punishment of Hellfire.*

*As bounty from your Lord. That is what is the great attainment.”*

***“Indeed, the righteous will be in a secure place.”***

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and

slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“Indeed, the righteous will be in a secure place. Within gardens and springs. Wearing [garments of] fine silk and brocade...”***

A muslim should strive to perform the deeds which lead to this fine blessing. For example, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1601, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who consoles a grief stricken person will be clothed with a garment of honor on Judgment Day.

As facing difficulties is guaranteed for all this is an extremely simple way of obtaining a great reward which does not require much time, energy or money. This includes striving to aid the family facing a difficulty according to one's means, such as emotional, financial and physical support. A muslim must gently encourage those facing difficulties to remain patient throughout the ordeal and remind them of the verses of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the importance and great reward of being patient. They should speak positively by reminding them that things only occur for a good reason even if people fail to understand the wisdom behind them. In reality, a person does not to be a scholar to perform this righteous deed as in most cases a few kind words of support are enough to make someone facing difficulties feel better. And in some cases just physically being there is enough to provide them with the feeling of support even if no words are spoken.

Finally, it is important muslims correct their intention when performing this righteous deed meaning, do it for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not do

it in order to show off to others, such as their relatives, nor do it out of fear of being criticized by others if they fail to do it. Those who act for the sake of others will be told on Judgment Day to gain 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.

***“Indeed, the righteous will be in a secure place. Within gardens and springs. Wearing [garments of] fine silk and brocade, facing each other.”***

These verses encourage adopting good companionship in this world as it leads to positive results in the hereafter.

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.”*

***“Indeed, the righteous will be in a secure place. Within gardens and springs. Wearing [garments of] fine silk and brocade, facing each other.”***

Every muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they barely know him as they are too busy to study his life, character and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

***“Indeed, the righteous will be in a secure place. Within gardens and springs. Wearing [garments of] fine silk and brocade, facing each other. Thus. And We will marry them to fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes. They will call therein for every [kind of] fruit - safe and secure.”***

Righteousness involves internal belief coupled with outward good actions.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Therefore, muslims must actualize their belief in the Day of Judgement by practically preparing for it. This involves 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.

***“Indeed, the righteous will be in a secure place. Within gardens and springs. Wearing [garments of] fine silk and brocade, facing each other. Thus. And We will marry them to fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes. They will call therein for every [kind of] fruit - safe and secure.”***

Allah, the Exalted, gives people according to what they do. For example, the Holy Quran mentions that if one remembers Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will remember them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

*“So remember Me; I will remember you...”*

Feeding others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is just the same. The one who performs this righteous deed will be fed food from Paradise and whoever gives drink to others will be given drink from Paradise on Judgement Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2449.

***“Indeed, the righteous will be in a secure place. Within gardens and springs. Wearing [garments of] fine silk and brocade, facing each other. Thus. And We will marry them to fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes. They will call therein for every [kind of] fruit - safe and secure. They will not taste death therein except the first death...”***

It is hoped that the one who prepares adequately for their death will obtain these blessings.

Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The only way to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when

one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

***“Indeed, the righteous will be in a secure place. Within gardens and springs. Wearing [garments of] fine silk and brocade, facing each other. Thus. And We will marry them to fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes. They will call therein for every [kind of] fruit - safe and secure. They will not taste death therein except the first death...”***

It is hoped that the one who prepares adequately for their death will obtain these blessings.

It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of the material world. Unfortunately, muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared.

It is important for muslims to understand that no matter how long they live life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A muslim only fails preparing for the hereafter correctly because of their pursuit of the

excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities.

A muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“Indeed, the righteous will be in a secure place. Within gardens and springs. Wearing [garments of] fine silk and brocade, facing each other. Thus. And We will marry them to fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes. They will call therein for every [kind of] fruit - safe and secure. They will not taste death therein except the first death...”***

It is hoped that the one who prepares adequately for their death will obtain these blessings.

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.

***“Indeed, the righteous will be in a secure place. Within gardens and springs. Wearing [garments of] fine silk and brocade, facing each other. Thus. And We will marry them to fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes. They will call therein for every [kind of] fruit - safe and secure. They will not taste death therein except the first death, and He will have protected them from the punishment of Hellfire. As bounty from your Lord. That is what is the great attainment.”***

It is important for muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient.” And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves.”*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. 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.”*

***“Indeed, the righteous will be in a secure place. Within gardens and springs. Wearing [garments of] fine silk and brocade, facing each other. Thus. And We will marry them to fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes. They will call therein for every [kind of] fruit - safe and secure. They will not taste death therein except the first death, and He will have protected them from the punishment of Hellfire. As bounty from your Lord. That is what is the great attainment.”***

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be

upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

Chapter 44 – Ad Dukhan, Verses 58-59 of 59

٥٨ فَإِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنَاهُ  
بِلِسَانِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

٥٩ فَأَرْتَقِبْ  
إِنَّهُمْ مُّرْتَقِبُونَ

*“And indeed, We have eased it [the Quran] in your tongue that they might be reminded.*

*So watch; indeed, they are watching [for the consequences].”*

***“And indeed, We have eased it [the Quran] in your tongue that they might be reminded. So watch; indeed, they are watching [for the consequences].”***

The one who fails to benefit from the clear Holy Quran will soon face the consequences of their behaviour.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this

right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“And indeed, We have eased it [the Quran] in your tongue that they might be reminded. So watch; indeed, they are watching [for the consequences].”***

The one who fails to benefit from the clear Holy Quran will soon face the consequences of their behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

***“And indeed, We have eased it [the Quran] in your tongue that they might be reminded. So watch; indeed, they are watching [for the consequences].”***

The one who fails to benefit from the clear Holy Quran will soon face the consequences of their behaviour.

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And indeed, We have eased it [the Quran] in your tongue that they might be reminded. So watch; indeed, they are watching [for the consequences].”***

The one who fails to benefit from the clear Holy Quran will soon face the consequences of their behaviour.

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“And indeed, We have eased it [the Quran] in your tongue that they might be reminded. So watch; indeed, they are watching [for the consequences].”***

It is important for muslims to understand an important point in respect to advising others. It is the duty of muslims to advise others towards good and forbid evil but a muslim should not behave as if they have been put in charge as controllers over others. This attitude only leads to anger and bitterness especially, when others do not follow their advice. It is best for muslims to discharge their duty by advising others but they should avoid stressing over the outcome of their advice meaning, whether the person acts on their advice or not. If Allah, the Exalted, advised the greatest teacher and guide of mankind namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to stress over the outcome in many places of the Holy Quran how can a muslim claim or behave as if they have been put in charge of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

*“So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”*

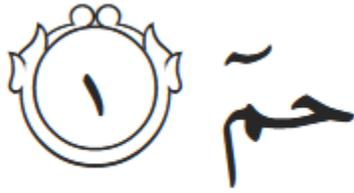
The muslim who behaves as a controller will not only become bitter when people fail to follow their advice but it can lead them to giving up advising others which is a duty on all muslims according to their ability.

In addition, this attitude will also cause muslims to neglect themselves and their own duties as they are too busy concerning themselves with the duties of others. Therefore, muslims should remain firm in commanding good and forbidding evil but refrain from observing and bothering about the outcome of their advice.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Chapter 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verse 1**



“Ḥā, Meem.”

## **“Ḥā, Meem.”**

Even though the actual meaning of these verses found within the Holy Quran are unknown using letters from the alphabet does indicate the importance of education and knowledge.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

## Chapter 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verse 2

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿٢﴾

*“The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.”*

***“The revelation of the Book is from Allah...”***

The Holy Quran has been revealed as a guidance for mankind but they will only benefit from it when they fulfil its rights.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete

loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“...Allāh, the Exalted in Might...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who over powers all things, who in reality is the only One who possesses power and might. Anyone else who possesses strength only does so because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. There is no atom in this world or in the next that can escape the power and authority of Allah, the Exalted.

As all power belongs to Allah, the Exalted, a muslim should therefore always remember that the strength to perform righteous deeds and refrain from sins comes from Allah, the Exalted, alone. This will remove any chance of pride creeping into their heart. An atom's worth of which is enough to take a person to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Whoever desires for their faith to become mighty must obey the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be granted strong faith which will aid them to overcome all difficulties so that they leave this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. True obedience only lies in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. 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.”*

Truly Knowing Allah, the Exalted, is All Mighty should prevent a muslim from sinning. As they should know there is no way to escape the might of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, when a muslim engraves this divine name into their heart it prevents them from committing oppression and wronging others. They become fully aware that even if there is no person powerful enough to seek justice from them Allah, the Exalted, will certainly take them to account and punish them in both worlds. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, oppression to others may cause the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted, to hurl them into Hell on Judgment Day.

***“...Allāh...the Wise.”***

Allah, the Exalted, possesses infinite knowledge of all things and their real nature and acts according to His infinite wisdom in a perfect manner. The muslim who understands this divine name will never object to His choices and decrees knowing that there is wisdom behind each choice of Allah, the Exalted, which benefits His servants even if they are not obvious to 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 act on this divine name by using their knowledge and blessings according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, as this is the ultimate wisdom a person can possess.

## Chapter 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verses 3-5

إِنَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣﴾

وَفِي خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبُثُّ مِن دَابَّةٍ ءَايَاتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾

وَأَخْلَفَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِن رِّزْقٍ فَأَحْيَا  
بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ ءَايَاتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٥﴾

*“Indeed, within the heavens and earth are signs for the believers.*

*And in the creation of yourselves and what He disperses of moving creatures are signs for people who are certain [in faith].*

*And [in] the alternation of night and day and [in] what Allah sends down from the sky of provision [i.e., rain] and gives life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and [in His] directing of the winds are signs for a people who reason.”*

***“Indeed, within the heavens and earth are signs for the believers...And [in] the alternation of night and day...are signs for a people who reason.”***

The believers sincerely desire to find and act upon the truth meaning, the purpose of their creation. This is why the signs of Allah, the Exalted, benefit them. Whereas, the one who is only interested in fulfilling their desires and even fears that the truth will contradict them will not benefit from the signs of Allah, the Exalted, even if they are slapped in the face with them.

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*“...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.””*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“Indeed, within the heavens and earth are signs for the believers...And [in] the alternation of night and day...are signs for a people who reason.”***

The believers sincerely desire to find and act upon the truth meaning, the purpose of their creation. This is why the signs of Allah, the Exalted, benefit them. Whereas, the one who is only interested in fulfilling their desires and even fears that the truth will contradict them will not benefit from the signs of Allah, the Exalted, even if they are slapped in the face with them.

It is important for a muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

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

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden message a muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

***“Indeed, within the heavens and earth are signs for the believers...And [in] the alternation of night and day...are signs for a people who reason.”***

The believers sincerely desire to find and act upon the truth meaning, the purpose of their creation. This is why the signs of Allah, the Exalted, benefit them. Whereas, the one who is only interested in fulfilling their desires and even fears that the truth will contradict them will not benefit from the signs of Allah, the Exalted, even if they are slapped in the face with them.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely,

Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

***“...and [in] what Allāh sends down from the sky of provision [i.e., rain] and gives life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and [in His] directing of the winds are signs for a people who reason.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Creator and Allocator of provision to the entire creation which they need to preserve their physical and spiritual constitutions. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the provision of the entire creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

The one who understands this divine name will rely on Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them as He has planned for them before they were created. They will prove this reliance by striving to gain lawful provision as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, while refraining from anything which is unlawful and doubtful.

It is important to note that as people require physical provision in the form of food and drink. Similarly, the soul of a muslim requires provision also. This provision strengthens it and leads it to eternal bliss. This provision is in the form of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The foundation of all this is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Therefore, muslims should strive to gain this important provision of the soul as well as provision for their physical body. Two elements should be remembered in this respect. Do not exert unlawful and unnecessary efforts in gaining one's guaranteed provision. And do not misuse or waste the provision one gains.

A muslim, should act on this divine name by fulfilling their duty by providing for their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. This includes providing them with both physical and spiritual provision through education. A muslim should also do the same for the needy according to their capacity without fearing poverty for themselves. They should remember the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893, which advises that Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the needs of the muslim who takes care of the needs of others.

***“Indeed, within the heavens and earth are signs for the believers. And in the creation of yourselves and what He disperses of moving creatures are signs for people who are certain [in faith]. And [in] the alternation of night and day and [in] what Allah sends down from the sky of provision [i.e., rain] and gives life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and [in His] directing of the winds are signs for a people who reason.”***

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one’s certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“Indeed, within the heavens and earth are signs for the believers. And in the creation of yourselves and what He disperses of moving creatures are signs for people who are certain [in faith]. And [in] the alternation of night and day and [in] what Allah sends down from the sky of provision [i.e., rain] and gives life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and [in His] directing of the winds are signs for a people who reason.”***

When Allah, the Exalted, created mankind from nothing, resurrecting them from dust and bones will be easier for Him. In addition, the same way Allah, the Exalted, gives life to a barren land through rain, He will give life to the dead on the Day of Resurrection.

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties

yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot

take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verse 6

تَلْكَ ءَايَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ  
وَأَيِّنَّهٖ يُؤْمِنُونَ



*“These are the verses of Allah which We recite to you in truth [with purpose]. Then in what statement after Allah and His verses will they believe?”*

***“These are the verses of Allah which We recite to you in truth [with purpose]. Then in what statement after Allah and His verses will they believe?”***

One will only be guided by the Holy Quran when they fulfil its rights.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete

loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“These are the verses of Allah which We recite to you in truth [with purpose]. Then in what statement after Allah and His verses will they believe?”***

One will only be guided by the Holy Quran when they fulfil its rights.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Therefore, muslims must actualize their belief in the Day of Judgement by practically preparing for it. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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.

***“...Then in what statement after Allah and His verses will they believe?”***

The Holy Quran possesses an uncountable amount of qualities which separates it from any other worldly book. This aspect of the Holy Quran is so intense that it cannot even be explained or discussed over countless lifetimes. But a few of these qualities will be mentioned here. First of all, in the Holy Quran, Allah, the Exalted, has given an open challenge to the entire universe (not just people) and not only a challenge to those who were present when this divine revelation was revealed but to all of creation till the end of time. The challenge being if the people believed the Holy Quran was not a divine revelation from Allah, the Exalted, then they should produce a chapter that can rival a chapter of the Holy Quran. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 23:

*“And if you are in some doubt, concerning what We sent down upon Our special devotee, then bring one chapter like it, and call upon all your helpers beside Allah, if you are truthful.”*

There is no book on the entire planet that can and has given this type of open challenge. But over 1400 years ago the Holy Quran gave this challenge to the entire universe and to this day this challenge has not been won by the non-Muslims nor will it ever be God willing.

Another quality of the Holy Quran is that it stated the outcome of future events. But the more amazing thing about these statements is that the outcomes seemed impossible at the time. For example chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 28:

*“It is He Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth that he may make it prevail over all other religions And Sufficient is Allah as witness.”*

When this verse was revealed the entire city of Mecca was Islam so when the people of Mecca heard this verse, unfortunately for them, they believed that Islam was too feeble and would therefore not survive long and certainly would not spread beyond the borders of Mecca let alone the entire world. But within a some years Allah, the Exalted, fulfilled this promise.

Another example of how the Holy Quran prophesied a future event which was unimaginable at the time is found in chapter 30 Ar Rum, verses 2-5:

*“The Romans have been subdued. In the nearby land and after their subjugation they will soon overcome. In a few years. The command is of Allah only before and after. And on that day the believers shall rejoice. With the help of Allah, He helps whom He pleases. And He is the Might, and Merciful.”*

These verses of the Holy Quran were revealed during a time where the Romans (Christians) were at war with the Persians (Fire worshippers). This war has been confirmed by many authentic historic books. At this particular time the Persians were on the verge of winning the war. At one point Rome itself was surrounded by the Persians. But Allah, the Exalted, stated that the Romans would eventually reign victorious. The non-Muslims of Mecca who themselves were idol worshippers favoured the Persians and agreed with the majority that it was impossible for the Romans to win. But Allah, the Exalted, as always proved these verses true and allowed the Romans victory.

A final example which appeals to the scientists of the world is seen in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 33:

*“And it is He Who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon. Each one is floating in a circumference.”*

For centuries scientists have fought over theories on how exactly the solar system is arranged e.g. whether the sun remains still and the Earth rotates around or vice versa. Only relatively recently it has been proven by scientists from all different faiths and backgrounds that each object; sun, moon and the Earth all rotate on their own axes and rotate around each other in a set orbit. But Allah, the Exalted, declared this over 1400 years ago. All the science related verses of the Holy Quran are slowly being proven by scientists today. This is a huge piece of evidence that proves

that the Holy Quran are the words of the One and only true God, Allah, the Exalted, who has created this universe and everything in it, because only a Creator can truly explain his creations.

Even though many commands of the Holy Quran may not be understood by people does not mean they are incorrect. Certain verses of the Holy Quran whose wisdom was hidden to man became apparent when society reached a certain level of development. As the whole Holy Quran is a book of wisdom and guidance it must be accepted irrespective if one understands its commands or not. This situation is just like a child who is suffering from a cold and desires ice cream but is not given it by their parent. The child will continue to cry without understanding the wisdom behind but those that possess knowledge will agree with the parent even though outwardly it appears as if the decision of the parent is wronging the child.

When studying the Holy Quran one will realize that it contains different levels of superiority through both obvious and subtle meanings that it discusses. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 1:

*“...[This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise and Aware.”*

The expressions in it are unparalleled and its meanings are explained in a simple straight forward way. Its verses are extremely eloquent and no other text can surpass it. The Holy Quran also mentioned the stories of the previous nations in detail even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not educated in history. It commanded every type of good and forbade every type of evil, those that affect an individual and those that affect an entire society so that peace and security can spread throughout homes and society. The Holy Quran is free from exaggerations, lies or falsehood unlike poems and stories. All the verses, whether short or long, in the Holy Quran are beneficial. Even when the same story is repeated in the Holy Quran different important lessons can be learned from it. Unlike all other books the Holy Quran does not become boring when it is repeatedly recited and a seeker of truth never gets fed up of studying it. The Holy Quran not only provides warnings and promises but supports them with unshakeable and clear proofs. When the Holy Quran discusses anything which can seem abstract, such as adopting patience, it always provides an easy and practical way of implementing it. It encourages one to fulfil the purpose of their creation and prepare for the eternal hereafter in a simple yet profound way. It makes the straight path clear and appealing to the one who desires true success in both worlds. The knowledge within it is timeless and can be applied to every society and age. It is a healing for every emotional, economical and physical difficulty when it is understood and applied correctly. It is the cure for every problem an individual or an entire society can ever encounter. One only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the societies which implemented the teachings of the Holy Quran correctly in order to understand its all encompassing benefits. Centuries have passed yet not even a single letter has been edited in the Holy Quran as Allah, the Exalted, promised to safeguard it. No other book in history possesses this quality. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 9:

*“Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [i.e., the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian.”*

This is undoubtedly the greatest and timeless miracle of Allah, the Exalted, granted to His final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But the only one who will benefit from it is the one who seeks the truth whereas the seekers of their desires will only find it difficult to hear and follow. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Chapter 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verses 7-11

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٧﴾

يَسْمَعُ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ تُنَلَّى عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يُصِرُّ مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَأَن لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا  
فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٨﴾

وَإِذَا عَلِمَ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا شَيْئًا اتَّخَذَهَا هُزُوًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ  
مُّهِينٌ ﴿٩﴾

مِّن وَرَائِهِم جَهَنَّمُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ مَا كَسَبُوا شَيْئًا وَلَا مَا  
اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

هَٰذَا هُدًى وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِّن رِّجْزٍ  
أَلِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾

“Woe to every sinful liar.

*Who hears the verses of Allah recited to him, then persists arrogantly as if he had not listened to them. So give him tidings of a painful punishment.*

*And when he knows anything of Our verses, he takes them in ridicule.  
Those will have a humiliating punishment.*

*Before them is Hell, and what they had earned will not avail them at all nor what they had taken besides Allah as allies. And they will have a great punishment.*

*This [Quran] is guidance. And those who have disbelieved in the verses of their Lord will have a painful punishment of foul nature.”*

***“Woe to every sinful liar.”***

Lying is unacceptable whether it is a small lie which is often called a white lie or when one lies as a joke. All of these types of lies are forbidden. In fact, the one who lies to make people laugh, so their aim is not to deceive someone, has been cursed three times in one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315.

Another popular lie people often speak believing it is not a sin is when they lie to children. This is undoubtedly a sin according to Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4991. It is plain foolishness to lie to children as they will only adopt this sinful habit from the elder who lies to them. Behaving in this manner shows children lying is acceptable when it is not acceptable according to the teachings of Islam. Only in very rare and extreme cases is lying acceptable for example, lying in order to protect the life of an innocent person.

It is vital to avoid lying as according to one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, it leads to other sins such as backbiting and mocking people. This behaviour leads one to the gates of Hell. When a person continues to lie they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great liar. It does not take a scholar to predict what will happen to a person on Judgment day who has been recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great liar.

All muslims desire the company of the Angels yet when a person lies they are deprived of their company. In fact, the stench that is omitted from the mouth of a liar causes the Angels to move a mile away from them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1972.

Telling lies which spread to others in society is a such a serious sin that according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7047, if a person does this and fails to repent they will be punished after their death to such an extent that an iron hook will be placed in their mouth and their facial skin will be torn off. Their face will regenerate instantly and the process will then be repeated. This will continuously occur until the Day of Judgment.

To conclude, all muslims should avoid all forms of lying irrespective of who they are conversing with.

***“Woe to every sinful liar.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed the importance of truthfulness and avoiding lies. The first part advises that truthfulness leads to righteousness which in turn leads to Paradise. When a person persists on truthfulness they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a truthful person.

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cherry picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

***“Woe to every sinful liar. Who hears the verses of Allāh recited to him, then persists arrogantly as if he had not listened to them. So give him tidings of a painful punishment.”***

One must avoid this behaviour by using their senses correctly.

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier yet the strength of muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge namely, they believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

***“Woe to every sinful liar. Who hears the verses of Allāh recited to him, then persists arrogantly as if he had not listened to them. So give him tidings of a painful punishment.”***

One must avoid this behaviour by using their senses correctly.

Listening correctly to the word of Allah, the Exalted, is the only way one can correctly adhere to its teachings. It is important to understand the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is simply acknowledging a sound with one’s mind even if they fail to make sense of the noise. For example, a person may hear someone shouting at them from a great distance but they will not be able to understand what they are saying. Whereas, listening involves hearing a sound and understanding it so that one’s behaviour changes. For example, a person giving a specific verbal instruction to another who responds appropriately after hearing and understanding the instructions.

Muslims need to hear the word of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to understand it so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way. Unfortunately, many Muslims have failed to live up to this in respect to the Holy Quran as they are good at hearing the recitation of the Holy Quran but fail to correctly listen to it which involves understanding and acting on its teachings.

To conclude, simply hearing the word of Allah, the Exalted, is not good enough to obtain success one must strive to instead truly listen to it.

***“Woe to every sinful liar. Who hears the verses of Allāh recited to him, then persists arrogantly as if he had not listened to them. So give him tidings of a painful punishment.”***

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.

***“Woe to every sinful liar...And when he knows anything of Our verses, he takes them in ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment.”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who obtains religious knowledge in order to show off to scholars, argue with others or attract attention to themselves will go to Hell.

Even though, the foundation of all good in both worldly and religious matters is knowledge Muslims must understand that knowledge will only benefit them when they firstly correct their intention. Meaning, they strive to obtain and act on knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted. All other reasons will only lead to a loss of reward and even punishment if a Muslim fails to sincerely repent.

In reality, knowledge is like rain water which falls on different types of trees. Some trees grow by this water in order to benefit others such as a fruit tree. Whereas, other trees grow by this water and become a nuisance to others such as a thorny tree. Even though, the rain water is the same in both cases but the outcome is very different. Similarly, religious knowledge is the same for people but if one adopts the incorrect intention then it will become a means of their destruction. Conversely, if one adopts the correct intention it will become a means of their salvation.

Muslims should therefore correct their intention in all matters as they will be judged on this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell will be a scholar who only obtained knowledge in order to show off to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

To conclude, only obtaining and acting on useful knowledge with the correct intention is true beneficial knowledge.

Whoever conceals knowledge without a valid reason will be bridled with fire on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2649. Therefore, muslims must share the useful knowledge their gain with others. It is simply foolish not to as this is one of the righteous deeds which will benefit a muslim even after they die. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 241. Those who hoarded knowledge were forgotten by history but those who shared it with others became known as the scholars and teachers of mankind.

***“Woe to every sinful liar...And when he knows anything of Our verses, he takes them in ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment.”***

It is important for muslims especially, in this day and age to understand the difference between those who discuss certain topics which may be considered controversial in order to genuinely benefit people through a positive change and those who simply discuss these issues in order to attract the attention of others. Those who desire a positive change in society will always show respect and good character towards others especially, to those they are challenging through their words. They never result to vulgar language or actions in order to declare their point of view. They instead study and understand the subject they are debating about without misinterpreting or falsifying information in order to support their point of view. Their criticism is always constructive and their genuine and sincere intention to improve the society is shown through their behaviour and words. These are the people who muslims should pay attention to as if they are correct it will improve society for everyone. But if their viewpoint is wrong they will accept the truth when it is made clear to them by others. But those who behave opposite to this correct attitude, whether they are found in the media or anywhere else, should simply be ignored as they do not desire to improve the lives of people. They are starved for attention and like an infant act out in order to attract some attention from others. Muslims should not circulate and pass on videos or other content which are linked to people like this as they are playing right into their hands and giving them the attention they so badly desire. Debating with these people is a complete waste of time because of their evil intention and behaviour. Muslims should instead place their efforts in other useful places which benefit them and others in both worlds.

***“Woe to every sinful liar...And when he knows anything of Our verses, he takes them in ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment.”***

A muslim must strive to act on their knowledge as knowledge without action is of no value or benefit. This is like the one who possesses knowledge of a path to safety but does not take it and instead remains in an area full of dangers. This is why knowledge can be split into two categories. The first is when one acts on their knowledge, which leads to piety and an increase in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. The second is when one fails to act on their knowledge. This type will not increase one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in fact, it will only increase them in arrogance believing they are superior to others even though they are like donkeys which carry books that do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

***“Woe to every sinful liar...And when he knows anything of Our verses, he takes them in ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment...And those who have disbelieved in the verses of their Lord will have a painful punishment of foul nature.”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“Woe to every sinful liar. Who hears the verses of Allāh recited to him, then persists arrogantly as if he had not heard them. So give him tidings of a painful punishment. And when he knows anything of Our verses, he takes them in ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment...This [Qur’ān] is guidance. And those who have disbelieved in the verses of their Lord will have a painful punishment of foul nature.”***

One must avoid this behaviour and outcome and instead make use of the guidance given through the Holy Quran by fulfilling its rights.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only

guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“Woe to every sinful liar. Who hears the verses of Allāh recited to him, then persists arrogantly as if he had not heard them. So give him tidings of a painful punishment. And when he knows anything of Our verses, he takes them in ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment...This [Qur’ān] is guidance. And those who have disbelieved in the verses of their Lord will have a painful punishment of foul nature.”***

One must avoid this behaviour and outcome and instead make use of the guidance given through the Holy Quran by fulfilling its rights.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of

Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“Woe to every sinful liar. Who hears the verses of Allāh recited to him, then persists arrogantly as if he had not heard them. So give him tidings of a painful punishment. And when he knows anything of Our verses, he takes them in ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment...This [Qur’ān] is guidance. And those who have disbelieved in the verses of their Lord will have a painful punishment of foul nature.”***

One must avoid this behaviour and outcome and instead make use of the guidance given through the Holy Quran by fulfilling its rights.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life.

Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“Woe to every sinful liar. Who hears the verses of Allāh recited to him, then persists arrogantly as if he had not heard them. So give him tidings of a painful punishment. And when he knows anything of Our verses, he takes them in ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment...This [Qur’ān] is guidance. And those who have disbelieved in the verses of their Lord will have a painful punishment of foul nature.”***

One must avoid this behaviour and outcome and instead make use of the guidance given through the Holy Quran by fulfilling its rights.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“Woe to every sinful liar. Who hears the verses of Allāh recited to him, then persists arrogantly as if he had not heard them. So give him tidings of a painful punishment. And when he knows anything of Our verses, he takes them in ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment...This [Qur’ān] is guidance. And those who have disbelieved in the verses of their Lord will have a painful punishment of foul nature.”***

One must avoid this behaviour and outcome and instead make use of the guidance given through the Holy Quran by fulfilling its rights.

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has

placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“Before them is Hell, and what they had earned will not avail them at all nor what they had taken besides Allāh as allies. And they will have a great punishment.”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the

corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“Before them is Hell, and what they had earned will not avail them at all nor what they had taken besides Allāh as allies. And they will have a great punishment.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be

thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“Before them is Hell, and what they had earned will not avail them at all nor what they had taken besides Allāh as allies. And they will have a great punishment.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“Before them is Hell, and what they had earned will not avail them at all nor what they had taken besides Allāh as allies. And they will have a great punishment.”***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

## Chapter 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verses 12-13

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الْبَحْرَ لِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلُكُ فِيهِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَلِيَبْتَغُوا  
مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾ (١٢)

﴿وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِنْهُ ۗ إِنَّ فِي  
ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾ (١٣)

*“It is Allah who subjected to you the sea so that ships may sail upon it by His command and that you may seek of His bounty; and perhaps you will be grateful.*

*And He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth - all from Him. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.”*

***“It is Allah who subjected to you the sea so that ships may sail upon it by His command and that you may seek of His bounty...”***

Water has been created with such balance that sea life can thrive within it while huge ships can sail on top of it. If water was more or less denser than this balance would not be possible. This perfect balance indicates a wise Creator namely, Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, in most countries the major part of trading occurs via ships.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that no one has eaten anything better than from the earnings of their own hands.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse laziness for trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Unfortunately, many Muslims turn away from working a lawful occupation, go on social benefits and inhabit the Mosques claiming to trust in Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them. This is not trusting in Allah, the Exalted, at all. It is only laziness which contradicts the teachings of Islam. True trust in Allah, the Exalted, in respect to gaining wealth is to use the means Allah, the Exalted, provided a person, such as their physical strength, in order to obtain lawful wealth according to the teachings of Islam and then trust that Allah, the Exalted, will provide lawful wealth to them through these means. The aim of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is not to

cause one to give up using the means He has created as this would make them useless and Allah, the Exalted, does not create useless things. The purpose of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is to prevent one from earning wealth through doubtful or unlawful means. As a Muslim should firmly believe their provision which includes wealth was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This allocation cannot change under any circumstances. A Muslim's duty is to strive in obtaining this through lawful means which is the tradition of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072. Using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, as He created them for this very purpose. A Muslim should therefore not be lazy while claiming trust in Allah, the Exalted, by going on social benefits when they have the means to earn lawful wealth through their own efforts and the means created and provided to them by Allah, the Exalted.

***“It is Allah who subjected to you the sea so that ships may sail upon it by His command and that you may seek of His bounty...”***

Water has been created with such balance that sea life can thrive within it while huge ships can sail on top of it. If water was more or less denser than this balance would not be possible. This perfect balance indicates a wise Creator namely, Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, in most countries the major part of trading occurs via ships.

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. This is similar to the patient who is operated on but feels no pain as they have been anesthetized.

***“And He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth - all from Him. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.”***

When one reflects on the Heavens and Earth they will realize that it has been organised in such a way that it benefits mankind. For example, the distance of the Sun from the Earth. If the Earth was closer or further away from the Sun then mankind could not survive. The perfect water cycle allows a continuous cycle of water for crops to grow and the creation to quench their thirst. The perfect density of the ocean and seas allows large ships to travel on top of them yet allows life to thrive within it. The perfect density of land allows for buildings to be erected yet weak sprouts from tiny powerless seeds can burst through the land in order to bring forth crops. The examples are endless. All this organisation cannot be dumb luck.

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is infinitely bountiful and bestows favours and blessings without recompense or external cause. He gives generously without being asked.

The muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by

fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to 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]...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by bestowing the blessings they have been given to others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. The one who gives to others will be given more than they could have ever imagined. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.”*

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Chapter 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verses 14-15

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يَغْفِرُوا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ أَيَّامَ اللَّهِ  
لِيَجْزِيَ قَوْمًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ  
رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

*“Say to those who have believed that they [should] forgive those who expect not the days of Allah [i.e., of His retribution] so that He may recompense a people for what they used to earn.*

*Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against it [i.e., the self or soul]. Then to your Lord you will be returned.”*

***“Say to those who have believed...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“Say, to those who have believed that they [should] forgive those who expect not the days of Allāh [of His retribution]...”***

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

***“Say, to those who have believed that they [should] forgive those who expect not the days of Allāh [of His retribution] so that He may recompense a people for what they used to earn.”***

Meaning, one should leave the recompense of actions to Allah, the Exalted, and instead concentrate on doing good, such as forgiving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

All muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and

respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“Say, to those who have believed that they [should] forgive those who expect not the days of Allāh [of His retribution] so that He may recompense a people for what they used to earn.”***

Meaning, one should leave the recompense of actions to Allah, the Exalted, and instead concentrate on doing good, such as forgiving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

*“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”*

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid a muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon

him, but also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”*

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on muslims as taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Finally, those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted, does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their small sins. A muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness and peace of mind in both worlds.

***“Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against it [i.e., the self or soul]...”***

It is important for Muslims to understand that when they treat others kindly it in reality, benefits themselves and not others. This is because treating others kindly has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted, and fulfilling this important duty gains one reward.

In addition, when one is kind to others they will supplicate for them while they are alive which will benefit them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6929, that a supplication done for a person in secret is always answered.

In addition, the people will supplicate for them after they pass away which is definitely answered as it has been recorded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 10:

*“...saying, “Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith...”*

Finally, a person who treated others kindly will gain their intercession on the Day of Judgment, which is a day people will be desperate for the

intercession of others. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7439.

But those who mistreat others even if they fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, will miss out on the benefits mentioned earlier. And on Judgment Day they will find that Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive them until their victim forgives them first. If they choose not to then the oppressor's good deeds will be given to their victim and if needed the victim's sins will be given to their oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Therefore, a muslim should be kind to themselves by being kind to others as in reality they are only benefiting themselves in this world and the next. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 6:

*“And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself...”*

***“Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against it [i.e., the self or soul]...”***

This verse is connected to chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

*“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”*

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfil the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's day. A muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the

more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

***“Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against it [i.e., the self or soul]...”***

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.

***“...so that He may recompense a people for what they used to earn. Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against it [i.e., the self or soul]. Then to your Lord you will be returned.”***

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.

***“...so that He may recompense a people for what they used to earn. Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against it [i.e., the self or soul]. Then to your Lord you will be returned.”***

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.

***“...so that He may recompense a people for what they used to earn. Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against it [i.e., the self or soul]. Then to your Lord you will be returned.”***

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.

***“...so that He may recompense a people for what they used to earn. Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against it [i.e., the self or soul]. Then to your Lord you will be returned.”***

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

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.

***“...so that He may recompense a people for what they used to earn. Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against it [i.e., the self or soul]. Then to your Lord you will be returned.”***

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.

Chapter 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verses 16-17

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ  
وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

وَأَتَيْنَاهُم بَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ ط مَا اخْتَلَفُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ  
مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ  
الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

*“And We did certainly give the Children of Israel the Scripture and wisdom and prophethood, and We provided them with good things and preferred them over the worlds.*

*And We gave them clear proofs of the matter [of religion]. And they did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves. Indeed, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which they used to differ.”*

***“And We did certainly give the Children of Israel the Scripture and wisdom...and We provided them with good things...”***

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. This is the wisdom referred to in the main verse under discussion, as wisdom encourages one to use their knowledge in the correct way so that they benefit themselves and others in both worlds.

***“And We did certainly give the Children of Israel the Scripture and wisdom and prophethood...”***

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and divine revelation is for them to be sincerely obeyed and followed.

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

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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 We provided them with good things...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is infinitely bountiful and bestows favours and blessings without recompense or external cause. He gives generously without being asked.

The muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to 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]...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by bestowing the blessings they have been given to others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. The one who gives to others will be given more than they could have ever imagined. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.”*

***“...and We provided them with good things...”***

Generally speaking, it is important for muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient.” And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there*

*was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves.”*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. 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 We did certainly give the Children of Israel the Scripture and judgement and prophethood, and We provided them with good things and preferred them over the worlds. And We gave them clear proofs of the matter [of religion]. And they did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves...”***

Out of desire for worldly things, such as wealth and authority, many scholars from the children of Israel concealed, changed and misinterpreted divine teachings as they knew they could only gain the worldly things they desired if they split from the main group and created their own faction.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who obtains religious knowledge in order to show off to scholars, argue with others or attract attention to themselves will go to Hell.

Even though, the foundation of all good in both worldly and religious matters is knowledge muslims must understand that knowledge will only benefit them when they firstly correct their intention. Meaning, they strive to obtain and act on knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted. All other reasons will only lead to a loss of reward and even punishment if a muslim fails to sincerely repent.

In reality, knowledge is like rain water which falls on different types of trees. Some trees grow by this water in order to benefit others such as a fruit tree. Whereas, other trees grow by this water and become a nuisance to others such as a thorny tree. Even though, the rain water is the same in both cases but the outcome is very different. Similarly, religious knowledge is the same for people but if one adopts the incorrect intention then it will become a means of their destruction. Conversely, if one adopts the correct intention it will become a means of their salvation.

Muslims should therefore correct their intention in all matters as they will be judged on this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell will be a scholar who only obtained knowledge in order to show off to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

To conclude, only obtaining and acting on useful knowledge with the correct intention is true beneficial knowledge.

Whoever conceals knowledge without a valid reason will be bridled with fire on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2649. Therefore, muslims must share the useful knowledge their gain with others. It is simply foolish not to as this is one of the righteous deeds which will benefit a muslim even after they die. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 241. Those who hoarded knowledge were forgotten by history but those who shared it with others became known as the scholars and teachers of mankind.

***“And We did certainly give the Children of Israel the Scripture and judgement and prophethood, and We provided them with good things and preferred them over the worlds. And We gave them clear proofs of the matter [of religion]. And they did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves...”***

Out of desire for worldly things, such as wealth and authority, many scholars from the children of Israel concealed, changed and misinterpreted divine teachings as they knew they could only gain the worldly things they desired if they split from the main group and created their own faction.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

Envy is a serious and major sin because the envier's problem is not with another person in reality it is with Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who granted the blessing which is envied. So a person's envy only demonstrates their displeasure with the allocation and choice of Allah, the Exalted. They believe Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake when He allocated a particular blessing to another person instead of them.

Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when the envier strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing. Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feelings and strives to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing. Even though this type is not a sin it is considered disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and praiseworthy if it is over a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first person who can be lawfully envied is the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second person who can be lawfully envied is the one who uses their knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

An envious muslim should strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person envied such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

***“And We did certainly give the Children of Israel the Scripture and judgement and prophethood, and We provided them with good things and preferred them over the worlds. And We gave them clear proofs of the matter [of religion]. And they did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves...”***

Out of desire for worldly things, such as wealth and authority, many scholars from the children of Israel concealed, changed and misinterpreted divine teachings as they knew they could only gain the worldly things they desired if they split from the main group and created their own faction.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When

one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true muslim.

If a muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous

craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

***“And We did certainly give the Children of Israel the Scripture and judgement and prophethood, and We provided them with good things and preferred them over the worlds. And We gave them clear proofs of the matter [of religion]. And they did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves...”***

Out of desire for worldly things, such as wealth and authority, many scholars from the children of Israel concealed, changed and misinterpreted divine teachings as they knew they could only gain the worldly things they desired if they split from the main group and created their own faction.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that he did not fear poverty for the muslim nation. Instead he feared that the world would become easy to obtain and plentiful for them. This would cause them to compete for it which would lead to their destruction as this same competition destroyed the previous nations.

It is important to understand that this does not only apply to wealth. But this warning applies to all aspects of people's worldly desires which can be encompassed by the desire for fame, wealth, authority and the social aspects of one's life, such as family, friends and a career. Whenever one aims to fulfil their desires by pursuing these things, even if they are lawful, beyond their needs it will distract them from preparing for the hereafter. It will lead them to bad character such as being wasteful and extravagant and may even take them towards sins in order to obtain these things. Failing to

obtain them may lead to impatience and other acts of defiance and disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious these desires have taken control over many muslims as they would happily get up in the middle of the night in order to obtain these things such as wealth or go on a holiday but will fail to do so when advised to offer the voluntary night prayer or attend the morning obligatory prayer at the Mosque with congregation.

There is no harm in obtaining these things as long as they are lawful and required in order to fulfil a person's needs and the needs of their dependents. But when a person goes beyond this then they will become preoccupied with them at the loss of their hereafter as the more one pursues their desires the less they will strive in preparing for the hereafter. And therefore, the warning given in this Hadith will apply to them.

***“And We did certainly give the Children of Israel the Scripture and judgement and prophethood, and We provided them with good things and preferred them over the worlds. And We gave them clear proofs of the matter [of religion]. And they did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves...”***

Out of desire for worldly things, such as wealth and authority, many scholars from the children of Israel concealed, changed and misinterpreted divine teachings as they knew they could only gain the worldly things they desired if they split from the main group and created their own faction.

Interestingly, these verses do not condemn having differences within religion. They condemn the differences that sprout from evil motives, such as envy and desire for worldly things. Islam has therefore stressed the importance of unity so that muslims avoid this outcome.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6541, discusses some aspects of creating unity within society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, firstly advised muslims not to envy each other.

This is when a person desires to obtain the very blessing someone else possesses meaning, they desire for the owner to lose the blessing. And it involves disliking the fact that the owner was given the blessing by Allah,

the Exalted, instead of them. Some only desire this to occur in their hearts without showing it through their actions or speech. If they dislike their thought and feeling it is hoped that they will not be held accountable for their envy. Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when a person strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing.

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feeling and if they strive to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second is when a person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

The evil type of envy, as mentioned earlier, directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The envious person behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. This is why it is a major sin. In fact, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903, envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

An envious muslim must strive to act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. An envious muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A muslim should remember that other people are not perfect just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess.

Another point must be made on this topic. A muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those who oppose their scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a

legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars a muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a muslim to sever ties with another muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another muslim. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a muslim should continue to advise the other muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims are commanded to be like brothers to one another. This is only achievable if they obey the previous advice given in this Hadith and strive to fulfil their duty towards other muslims according to the teachings of Islam, such as helping others in matters of good and warning them from evil matters. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, advises that a muslim should fulfil the following rights of other muslims: they are to return the Islamic greeting of peace, to visit the sick, to take part in their funeral prayers and to reply to the sneezer who praises Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must learn and fulfil all the rights other people, especially other muslims, have over them.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another muslim. The sins a person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4884, that whoever humiliates another muslim Allah, the Exalted, will humiliate them. And whoever protects a muslim from humiliation will be protected by Allah, the Exalted.

The negative characteristics mentioned in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning can develop when one adopts pride. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, pride is when one looks down on others in

contempt. The proud person sees themselves as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that it is a sin for a muslim to hate another muslim. This hatred applies to worldly things and not disliking others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, loving and hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then a muslim must show respect to others in all cases and dislike only their sins without actually hating the person. In addition, their dislike must never cause them to act against the teachings of Islam as this would prove their hatred is based on their own desires and not

for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The root cause of despising others for worldly reasons is pride. It is vital to understand that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a muslim's life, property and honour are all sacred. A muslim must not violate any of these rights without a just reason. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true muslim until they protect other people, including non-muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should treat others exactly how they want people to treat them. This will lead to much blessings for an individual and create unity within their society.

***“And We did certainly give the Children of Israel the Scripture and judgement and prophethood, and We provided them with good things and preferred them over the worlds. And We gave them clear proofs of the matter [of religion]. And they did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves...”***

These verses could also be referring to their attitude towards the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

The scholars from the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) living in Medina were fully aware of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they had been described in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

*“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons...”*

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

*“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons...”*

It is important to note, that all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, came with the same religion, Islam – submission to Allah, the Exalted. The only thing they differed in were smaller issues but their core and fundamental teachings were one in the same. As the Holy Quran was in harmony with the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures there was no good reason why the people of the book should have rejected the Holy Quran and the one to whom it was given namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, it was more appropriate for them to accept Islam as the scholars of the people of the book possessed knowledge which allowed them to recognize the truth easily.

In addition, the fact that the Holy Quran confirmed the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures meant that when one rejected the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they were in essence rejecting their previous divine scriptures and their Holy Prophets, such as the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon them, also.

After all these signs verifying the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, many of the scholars of the people of the book still concealed and misinterpreted their divine teachings out of envy and fear of losing the social status and wealth they had obtained as leaders of their societies.

For example, in the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This Christian delegation did not accept Islam but agreed to a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the delegation left Medina two brothers, Abu Haritha and Kurz Bin Alqama, were riding near each other. The mule of Abu Haritha stumbled and Kurz in frustration rebuked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indirectly. Abu Haritha in response rebuked him. When Kurz asked about his response Abu Haritha told him that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was undoubtedly the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, they had been waiting for and who had been described in their divine scriptures. When Kurz asked him why he rejected Islam even though he knew it was the truth Abu Haritha replied that he did so because of the honor, wealth and authority their people had given them and he was afraid he would lose it all if he accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 75-76.

***“And We did certainly give the Children of Israel the Scripture and judgement and prophethood, and We provided them with good things and preferred them over the worlds. And We gave them clear proofs of the matter [of religion]. And they did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves. Indeed, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which they used to differ.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who judges the actions of His creation and justly chooses the outcome of all things. The muslim who understands that Allah, the Exalted, only acts with justice will always be pleased with His choices and will therefore show patience in difficulty and gratitude in pleasing situations. The one who is content with the rulings of the Just will find peace in this world and in the next.

A muslim must act on this divine name by always acting with justice with themself and in matters concerning others. This includes fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, oneself and others according to the teachings of Islam even if it contradicts one's desires or the desires of others. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”*

The one who achieves this will become a complete balanced believer. This is the character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

***“And We did certainly give the Children of Israel the Scripture and judgement and prophethood, and We provided them with good things and preferred them over the worlds. And We gave them clear proofs of the matter [of religion]. And they did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves...”***

As the children of Israel failed to fulfil the role granted to them as the ambassadors of Allah, the Exalted, this responsibility was transferred to the muslims. It is extremely important for muslims to fulfil this duty according to their potential. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many muslims today believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A muslim should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

In addition, this important position should remind muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted, become angry with the muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

Chapter 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verses 18-19

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيعَةٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ  
أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

إِنَّهُمْ لَن يَغْنُوا عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ  
بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

*“Then We put you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] on an ordained way concerning the matter [of religion]; so follow it and do not follow the inclinations of those who do not know.*

*Indeed, they will never avail you against Allah at all. And indeed, the wrongdoers are allies of one another; but Allah is the protector of the righteous.”*

***“Then We put you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] on an ordained way concerning the matter [of religion]; so follow it...but Allah is the protector of the righteous.”***

This ordained way consists of sincerely obeying and following the Holy Quran and the traditions 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 Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

***“Then We put you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] on an ordained way concerning the matter [of religion]; so follow it...but Allah is the protector of the righteous.”***

This ordained way consists of sincerely obeying and following the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the

body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“Then We put you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] on an ordained way concerning the matter [of religion]; so follow it and do not follow the inclinations of those who do not know. Indeed, they will never avail you against Allāh at all...but Allāh is the protector of the righteous.”***

This ordained way consists of sincerely obeying and following the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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.

***“Then We put you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] on an ordained way concerning the matter [of religion]; so follow it and do not follow the inclinations of those who do not know. Indeed, they will never avail you against Allāh at all...but Allāh is the protector of the righteous.”***

This ordained way consists of sincerely obeying and following the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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.

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This ordained way consists of sincerely obeying and following the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Some have adopted a strange attitude. When they are questioned about things they are unaware of instead of admitting the truth they give a reply which has little or no foundation in the truth. This can become a serious issue especially in matters connected to Islam. A muslim may get punished for giving incorrect information which others act on. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. This is because they ignorantly attributed things to Allah, the Exalted, or the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Because of these people strange beliefs and customs have become attached to Islam which is a great deviation from the truth brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, many of the cultural customs muslims have adopted believing them to be a part of Islam occurred because of this ignorant mentality.

These people believe that if they simply admit they do not know something they will appear foolish to others. This mentality in itself is extremely foolish as the righteous predecessors would stress the importance of admitting

one's ignorance so that others do not become misguided. In fact, the righteous predecessors would only count the person who behaved in this manner as an intelligent person and counted the one who answered every question posed to them a fool.

This attitude is often observed in elders who often advise their children on issues relating to the world and religion instead of admitting their ignorance and directing them to someone who knows the truth. When elders act in this way they fail their duty in rightly guiding their dependents which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

Muslims should therefore, gain correct knowledge, whether worldly or religious, before advising others and in cases they are unaware of something they should admit it as this will not reduce their rank in anyway. If anything Allah, the Exalted, and people will appreciate their honesty.

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This ordained way consists of sincerely obeying and following the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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.

***“Then We put you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] on an ordained way concerning the matter [of religion]; so follow it and do not follow the inclinations of those who do not know. Indeed, they will never avail you against Allāh at all...but Allāh is the protector of the righteous.”***

This ordained way consists of sincerely obeying and following the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

These verses also include following those who blindly imitate their forefathers, as this attitude is rooted in ignorance.

A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation. Blind imitation is even disliked within Islam.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

*“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”*

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five daily obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.

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This ordained way consists of sincerely obeying and following the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

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This ordained way consists of sincerely obeying and following the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These verses also indicate that the one who is ignorant will fail to follow this way.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

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This ordained way consists of sincerely obeying and following the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These verses also indicate that the one who is ignorant will fail to follow this way. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient

and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“...And indeed, the wrongdoers are allies of one another...”***

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.

***“...And indeed, the wrongdoers are allies of one another...”***

Since the passing of the righteous predecessors the strength of the muslim nation has weakened dramatically. It is logical that the greater the number of people in a group the stronger the group will become yet muslims have somehow defied this logic. The strength of the muslim nation has only decreased as the number of muslims have increased. One of the main reasons this has occurred is connected to chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2 of the Holy Quran:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many muslims now observe who is doing an action instead of observing what they are doing. If the person is linked to them for example, a relative, they support them even if the thing is not good. Similarly, if the person has no relationship with them they turn away from supporting them even if the thing is good. This attitude completely contradicts the traditions of the righteous predecessors. They would support others in good irrespective of who was doing it. In fact, they went so far on acting on this verse of the Holy Quran that they would even support those they did not get on with as long as it was a good thing.

The other thing connected to this is that many muslims fail to support each other in good as they believe the person they are supporting will gain more prominence than them. This condition has even affected scholars and Islamic educational institutes. They make lame excuses not to aid others in good as they do not have a relationship with them and they fear their own institution will be forgotten and those they help will gain further respect in society. But this is completely wrong as one only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the truth. As long as one's intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, supporting others in good will increase their respect within society. Allah, the Exalted, will cause the hearts of the people to turn to them even if their support is for another organisation, institution or person. For example, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed this world Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily challenged for the Caliphate and would have found plenty of support in his favour. But he knew the right thing to do was to nominate Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not worry about being forgotten by society if he supported another person. He instead obeyed the command in the verse mentioned earlier and supported what was right. This is confirmed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. The honour and respect of Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, within society only increased by this action. This is obvious to those who are aware of Islamic history.

Muslims must reflect on this deeply, change their mentality and strive to aid others in good irrespective of who is doing it and not hold back fearing their support will cause them to be forgotten within society. Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will never be forgotten in both this world and the next. In fact, their respect and honour will only grow in both worlds.

***“...And indeed, the wrongdoers are allies of one another...”***

This verse warns against bad 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.”*

***“...but Allāh is the protector of the righteous.”***

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and

slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“...but Allāh is the protector of the righteous.”***

Allah, the Exalted, safeguards and preserves the creation and takes care of them with special care. He protects the obedient from the plots and traps of the Devil and He safeguards the disobedient from His immediate punishment in order to give them an opportunity to sincerely repent.

A muslim should act on this divine name by using the means provided to them by Allah, the Exalted, but always trust in His divine care and choices in every situation and outcome they face even if they do not observe the wisdom behind some choices. This inspires patience and even contentment with the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

*“...And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him...”*

A muslim should also understand that they will only be protected from misguidance and punishment by the Guardian namely, Allah, the Exalted. This removes any signs of pride and ensures they seek His protection through sincere obedience to Him. A muslim must act on this divine name by safeguarding every trust they possess such as their blessings by using them according to the teachings of Islam. They should safeguard their actions and speech from the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This will

ensure they receive more blessings from 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 Allāh is the protector of the righteous.”***

Generally speaking, this verse also teaches muslims that whenever they encounter a difficult situation they should remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, trusting that He will provide them a way out of it even if this seems impossible at the time. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

*“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”*

A muslim should understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best for His servants even if the wisdoms behind the difficulty are not obvious. It is a person's reaction which either leads to blessings or the anger of Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to reflect on the countless examples in their own life where they believed something was bad only to change their mind later on and vice versa. This is just like when a person takes a bitter medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. Even though the medicine is bitter they still take it believing it will benefit them. It is strange how a muslim can trust a doctor whose knowledge is limited and who is not absolutely certain the bitter medicine will benefit them and fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge is infinite and when He only decrees the best for His servants.

A muslim should understand the difference between wishful thinking and trust in Allah, the Exalted. The person who does not obey Allah, the

Exalted, and then expects Him to help them in difficulties is a wishful thinker. The one who will gain the help of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated in this great event, is the one who sincerely strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience and then trusts His judgment without complaining or questioning His choice.

Chapter 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verse 20

هَذَا بَصِيرَةٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ



*“This [Quran] is enlightenment for mankind and guidance and mercy for a people who are certain [in faith].”*

***“This [Quran] is enlightenment for mankind...”***

Learning and acting on the Holy Quran leads to enlightenment meaning, peace, in both worlds.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to

the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“This [Quran] is enlightenment for mankind...”***

Learning and acting on the Holy Quran leads to enlightenment meaning, peace, in both worlds.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the

more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“This [Quran] is enlightenment for mankind...”***

Learning and acting on the Holy Quran leads to enlightenment meaning, peace, in both worlds.

It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

*“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”*

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of

mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

***“This [Quran] is enlightenment for mankind...”***

The word enlightenment can also be interpreted to mean something which gives a person the correct insight/perception. The one who learns and acts on the Holy Quran will be granted the correct understanding and perception.

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“This [Quran] is enlightenment for mankind...”***

The word enlightenment can also be interpreted to mean something which gives a person the correct insight/perception. The one who learns and acts on the Holy Quran will be granted the correct understanding and perception.

It is important for a muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

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

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden message a muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

***“This [Quran] is enlightenment for mankind...”***

The word enlightenment can also be interpreted to mean something which gives a person the correct insight/perception. The one who learns and acts on the Holy Quran will be granted the correct understanding and perception.

It is important for muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt.

But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“This [Quran] is enlightenment for mankind...”***

The word enlightenment can also be interpreted to mean something which gives a person the correct insight/perception. The one who learns and acts on the Holy Quran will be granted the correct understanding and perception.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

***“This [Quran] is enlightenment for mankind...”***

The word enlightenment can also be interpreted to mean something which gives a person the correct insight/perception. The one who learns and acts on the Holy Quran will be granted the correct understanding and perception.

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that

they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“This [Quran] is enlightenment for mankind and guidance and mercy for a people who are certain [in faith].”***

Only those who are certain they will face the consequences of their actions will sincerely obey and follow the Holy Quran as they know salvation lies in this attitude. From this one can judge how much they truly believe in the Day of Judgement and facing the consequences of their actions.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their

desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“This [Quran] is enlightenment for mankind and guidance and mercy for a people who are certain [in faith].”***

Only those who are certain they will face the consequences of their actions will sincerely obey and follow the Holy Quran as they know salvation lies in this attitude. From this one can judge how much they truly believe in the Day of Judgement and facing the consequences of their actions.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of

ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“This [Quran] is enlightenment for mankind and guidance and mercy for a people who are certain [in faith].”***

Only those who are certain they will face the consequences of their actions will sincerely obey and follow the Holy Quran as they know salvation lies in this attitude. From this one can judge how much they truly believe in the Day of Judgement and facing the consequences of their actions.

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

## Chapter 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verses 21-22

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ  
ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً مَحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتِهِمْ سَاءَ  
مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

وَخَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَلِتُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ  
بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

*“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume].*

*And Allah created the heavens and earth in truth and so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.”*

***“Or do those who commit evils think...”***

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.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume].”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume].”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and

agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume].”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume].”***

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely,

depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume].”***

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freed has obtained happiness whereas the

other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume].”***

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume].”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only

this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume].”***

It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

*“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”*

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the

hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

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Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a muslim is in danger of dying as a non-muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

*“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”*

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume].”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the

corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume].”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person who imitates a people is counted as one of them.

All muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly warns that a muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done 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.

But those who verbally declare their love for the righteous and fail to imitate them and instead imitate the characteristics found in hypocrites and the sinful will be considered and judged as one of them. This does not mean they will lose their faith but it means they will be judged as disobedient muslims. How can a disobedient muslim be counted as an obedient muslim and end up with the righteous? This is only wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 20:

*“Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise.  
The companions of Paradise - they are the attainers [of success].”*

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume]. And Allāh created the heavens and earth in truth [with purpose] and so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.”***

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume]. And Allāh created the heavens and earth in truth [with purpose] and so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.”***

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.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume]. And Allāh created the heavens and earth in truth [with purpose] and so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.”***

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.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume]. And Allāh created the heavens and earth in truth [with purpose] and so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many

oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume]. And Allāh created the heavens and earth in truth [with purpose] and so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume]. And Allāh created the heavens and earth in truth [with purpose] and so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.”***

One must prepare for their Final Judgement 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.

***“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [assume]. And Allāh created the heavens and earth in truth [with purpose] and so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.”***

One must prepare for their Final Judgement 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.

## Chapter 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verse 23

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ  
سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ عَلَىٰ بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ  
اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

*“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and Allah has sent him astray due to knowledge and has set a seal upon his hearing and his heart and put over his vision a veil? So who will guide him after Allah? Then will you not be reminded?”*

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”***

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for.

One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”***

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a muslim is in danger of dying as a non-muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

*“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”*

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be

granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind

as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true muslim.

If a muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This muslim risks

losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2886, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, criticized the slaves of wealth and fine clothing. These people are pleased when they receive these things and become displeased when they do not.

In reality, this applies to all non-essential worldly things. This criticism is not directed at those who strive in the material world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted. But it is directed at those who either pursue the unlawful in order to obtain wealth and other worldly things in order to satisfy their desires and the desires of others. And it is directed at those who pursue non-essential lawful things in such a way that it causes them to neglect obeying Allah, the Exalted, correctly. This obedience involves 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. This prevents them from preparing adequately for the hereafter and their final judgment.

In addition, this criticism is for those who are impatient when they do not obtain their unnecessary desires in this world. This attitude can cause a muslim to obey Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, they obey Him when they obtain their desires but when they do not they angrily turn away from His obedience. The Holy Quran has warned of a severe loss in both worlds for the one who adopts this attitude. 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.”*

Muslims should instead learn to be patient and content with what they possess as this is true richness according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2420. In reality, the person full of desires is needy meaning, poor even if they possess much wealth. A muslim should know Allah, the Exalted, grants people what is best for them and not according to their desires as this in most cases would lead to their destruction. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

*“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Aware and Seeing.”*

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey 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 whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

A specific type of wishful thinking which affected the past nations and even the muslim nation is when a person believes that they can ignore the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, and somehow someone on the Day of Judgement will intercede for them and save them from Hell. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact and has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less even with his intercession some muslims whose punishment will be reduced by it will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil convinces those who do not believe in Judgement Day that even if it occurs they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on that day by claiming that they were not so bad as they avoided major crimes such as murder. They have convinced themselves that their pleas will be accepted and they will be sent to Paradise even though they disbelieved in Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. This is incredibly foolish as Allah, the Exalted, will not treat the person who believed in Him and tried to obey him like the one who disbelieved in Him. A single verse has erased this type of wishful thinking. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

*“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”*

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”***

Unfortunately, there are some who claim that faith is not required in this world and others who are Muslims claim it is enough to profess Islam without supporting it with sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. But the increase in crimes within society proves the importance of faith and strengthening it through knowledge and action. This is because crimes and sins only occur as a person feels they will either face no consequences for their actions, such as prison, or they will somehow escape them for example, by fleeing the country. But the person who believes that no matter what action they perform, whether open or secret, big or small, and no matter what tricks they attempt a day will undoubtedly come where they will be held accountable for all their deeds will always think twice before committing a crime or a sin. If this belief is strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge it will deter one from committing crimes and sins. If people acted in this way peace and justice would spread across society. The crime rate would decrease and the times would closely match the times of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his rightly guided Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them. This fact alone indicates the importance of faith and strengthening it through gaining and acting on knowledge within society. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 90:

*“Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving [help] to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.”*

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”***

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freed has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows

up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and Allāh has...set a seal upon his hearing...”***

When one refuses to acknowledge the truth and the purpose of their creation and instead only aims to fulfil their desires they will fail to use their senses correctly. This will lead to them becoming sealed.

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier yet the strength of muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge namely, they believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and Allāh has...set a seal upon his hearing...”***

When one refuses to acknowledge the truth and the purpose of their creation and instead only aims to fulfil their desires they will fail to use their senses correctly. This will lead to them becoming sealed.

Listening correctly to the word of Allah, the Exalted, is the only way one can correctly adhere to its teachings. It is important to understand the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is simply acknowledging a sound with one’s mind even if they fail to make sense of the noise. For example, a person may hear someone shouting at them from a great distance but they will not be able to understand what they are saying. Whereas, listening involves hearing a sound and understanding it so that one’s behaviour changes. For example, a person giving a specific verbal instruction to another who responds appropriately after hearing and understanding the instructions.

Muslims need to hear the word of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to understand it so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way. Unfortunately, many Muslims have failed to live up to this in respect to the Holy Quran as they are good at hearing the recitation of the Holy Quran but fail to correctly listen to it which involves understanding and acting on its teachings.

To conclude, simply hearing the word of Allah, the Exalted, is not good enough to obtain success one must strive to instead truly listen to it.

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and Allāh has...set a seal upon...his heart...”***

When one refuses to acknowledge the truth and the purpose of their creation and instead only aims to fulfil their desires they will fail to use their senses correctly. This will lead to them becoming sealed.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the

outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and Allāh has...set a seal upon...his heart...”***

When one refuses to acknowledge the truth and the purpose of their creation and instead only aims to fulfil their desires they will fail to use their senses correctly. This will lead to them becoming sealed.

The corruption and hardness of the spiritual heart is an extremely important matter which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and, blessings be upon him, warned that when the spiritual heart becomes corrupt then the whole body becomes corrupt. This corruption is then reflected in one’s speech and actions. Similarly, the Holy Quran has highlighted the importance of a soft and sound heart by advising that one will not derive benefit from their possessions or relatives on Judgment Day unless they possess a sound spiritual heart. Chapter 26 Ash Shu’ara, verses 88-89:

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

The one with a hard spiritual heart can be described as a person who rejects the truth when it is presented to them believing they are superior in knowledge. They lack submission and the fear of Allah, the Exalted, which leads to abandoning good deeds, committing sins, excessive love and

striving for the material world while remaining heedless to preparing for the eternal hereafter. The hard hearted are easily influenced by the Devil into committing sins and rejecting good deeds. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 53:

*“[That is] so He may make what Satan throws in [i.e., asserts] a trial for those within whose hearts is disease and those hard of heart...”*

Two specific blameworthy characteristics are adopted by the one who possesses a hard spiritual heart. They intentionally misinterpret divine scriptures in order to fulfil their own desires such as obtaining fame. They criticise those who strive to adhere to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they desire people to follow their thinking and love for the material world. The second is that they cherry pick verses and Hadiths which suit their desires. They label those who strive to adopt and act on all verses and Hadiths as extremists thereby making their own attitude seem pleasing to others. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 13:

*“So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened. They distort words from their [proper] places [i.e., usages] and have forgotten a portion of that of which they were reminded. And you will still observe deceit among them, except a few of them...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned that those who talk excessively without mentioning Allah, the Exalted, are prone to adopting a spiritual hard heart. The one who possesses a hard spiritual heart is furthest from Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2411.

As mentioned earlier those who abandon the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, will be cursed with a hard heart. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 13:

*“So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who laughs excessively will become hard hearted. It is important to understand this does not mean one cannot smile as this has been classified as an act of charity by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1970. Laughing excessively causes one to adopt a mentality whereby they only discuss funny issues. This causes one to avoid serious issues such as death and Judgment Day. If one avoids these important issues how can they prepare for them? A lack of preparation will lead to one's spiritual heart becoming hard.

Some say over eating can cause hardness of the spiritual heart. This is because over eating causes one to become lazy. Laziness leads to a reduction in good deeds which can cause the spiritual heart to become hard.

As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334, when a person sins a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. If the number of sins increases then this blackness increases which leads to a hard spiritual heart. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

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

This is why it has been said persistently sinning can cause the spiritual heart to die.

It is important for muslims to strive to soften their heart as it leads to its purification. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, when the spiritual heart is purified all the limbs of the body become purified also. This purification will encourage one to perform righteous deeds and abandon sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and Allāh has...put over his vision a veil...”***

When one refuses to acknowledge the truth and the purpose of their creation and instead only aims to fulfil their desires they will fail to use their senses correctly. This will lead to them becoming sealed.

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and Allāh has...put over his vision a veil...”***

When one refuses to acknowledge the truth and the purpose of their creation and instead only aims to fulfil their desires they will fail to use their senses correctly. This will lead to them becoming sealed.

It is important for a muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

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

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden message a muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and Allāh has...put over his vision a veil...”***

When one refuses to acknowledge the truth and the purpose of their creation and instead only aims to fulfil their desires they will fail to use their senses correctly. This will lead to them becoming sealed.

It is important for muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt.

But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“...So who will guide him after Allāh? Then will you not be reminded?”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who guides His servants to what is beneficial for them in both worlds and guides them away from anything which harms them. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verse 8:

*“And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness.”*

The muslim who understands this divine name will seek guidance in worldly and religious matters from none other than Allah, the Exalted, through the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever seeks guidance from anything else will not find lasting success.

A muslim should act on this divine name by guiding others towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and what is beneficial to them in both worldly and religious matters according to their knowledge. This will ensure they become a true believer meaning, the one who loves for others what they desire for themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

***“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and Allāh has sent him astray due to knowledge and has set a seal upon his hearing and his heart and put over his vision a veil? So who will guide him after Allāh? Then will you not be reminded?”***

When one refuses to acknowledge the truth and the purpose of their creation and instead only aims to fulfil their desires they will fail to use their senses correctly. This will lead to them becoming sealed.

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should

think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

Chapter 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verse 24

وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ  
وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

*“And they say, “There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time.” And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming.”*

***“And they say, “There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time.” And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming.”***

People behave in this manner as acknowledging the Day of Judgement would mean that they must practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. As this way of life would prevent them from fulfilling their desires and whims they reject the concept of the Day of Judgement without evidence or knowledge.

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world

and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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.

***“And they say, “There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time.” And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming.”***

People behave in this manner as acknowledging the Day of Judgement would mean that they must practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. As this way of life would prevent them from fulfilling their desires and whims they reject the concept of the Day of Judgement without evidence or knowledge. It is important to note, even a muslim who believes in the Day of Judgement can adopt this attitude when they fail to practically prepare for it.

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 they say, “There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time.” And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming.”***

People behave in this manner as acknowledging the Day of Judgement would mean that they must practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. As this way of life would prevent them from fulfilling their desires and whims they reject the concept of the Day of Judgement without evidence or knowledge. It is important to note, even a muslim who believes in the Day of Judgement can adopt this attitude when they fail to practically prepare for it. 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 they say, “There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time.” And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming.”***

People behave in this manner as acknowledging the Day of Judgement would mean that they must practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. As this way of life would prevent them from fulfilling their desires and whims they reject the concept of the Day of Judgement without evidence or knowledge. A muslim must avoid this attitude by gaining and acting upon Islamic knowledge in order to obtain certainty of faith.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu’ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“And they say, “There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time.” And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming.”***

People behave in this manner as acknowledging the Day of Judgement would mean that they must practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. As this way of life would prevent them from fulfilling their desires and whims they reject the concept of the Day of Judgement without evidence or knowledge. A muslim must avoid this attitude by gaining and acting upon Islamic knowledge in order to obtain certainty of faith.

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one’s certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the

Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“And they say, “There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time.” And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming.”***

People behave in this manner as acknowledging the Day of Judgement would mean that they must practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. As this way of life would prevent them from fulfilling their desires and whims they reject the concept of the Day of Judgement without evidence or knowledge. A muslim must avoid this attitude by gaining and acting upon Islamic knowledge in order to obtain certainty of faith.

It is important for muslims to understand that their worldly knowledge irrespective of how much they possess is not enough to gain success in their religious life. Even though, gaining useful worldly knowledge is praiseworthy according to the teachings of Islam as it is an excellent means for one to obtain lawful provision for themselves and their dependents yet, it is not enough to safely guide them through their religious life. For example, in most cases, worldly knowledge will not teach someone how to safely journey through a difficulty or a test in a way which pleases Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward in both worlds. The obligatory duties and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cannot be acted on by a muslim who only possesses worldly knowledge. In fact, religious knowledge has the power to guide one to success in both worlds whereas worldly knowledge will only aid someone in this world. The one who possesses religious knowledge will adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which will result in such blessings and grace that they will find success in both worlds. Whereas, worldly knowledge will inspire one to deduce their own path in religion instead of

acting according to the teachings of the rightly guided namely, the righteous predecessors. Religion is not to about creating one's own path it is simply to adhere to Islamic teachings.

Unfortunately, many muslims who possess worldly knowledge do not realise this important point which only reduces their chances of achieving success in both worlds. Therefore, muslims should strive to obtain and act on both religious and useful worldly knowledge if they desire success in both worlds. This is why gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

## Chapter 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verses 25-26

وَإِذَا نُتِلَّى عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ مَّا كَانَ حُجَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا  
أَتْتُوا بِآبَائِنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

قُلِ اللَّهُ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يَجْمَعُكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ  
فِيهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

*“And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, their argument is only that they say, “Bring [back] our forefathers, if you should be truthful.”*

*Say, “Allah causes you to live, then causes you to die; then He will assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt, but most of the people do not know.”*”

***“And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences...”***

One will benefit from the clear evidences of the Holy Quran when they fulfill its rights.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete

loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“Say, “Allah causes you to live, then causes you to die...””***

Allah, the Exalted, alone created and controls both life and death.

The muslim who understands this divine name will submit and sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience without fearing any of the creation while knowing nothing controls life or death except Allah, the Exalted. In addition, a muslim who recognises this fact will understand that as Allah, the Exalted, chose the beginning and end of every creation He has also chosen everything that occurs in between. The choices of Allah, the Exalted, are unavoidable so one should not become impatient when facing them. Instead they should simply sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in every situation so that they obtain reward with every passing moment. For example, they should demonstrate patience during times of difficulty and demonstrate true gratitude by using the blessings they possess correctly in times of ease. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500.

A muslim should act on this divine name by bringing their spiritual heart to life and cause death to their ego and negative characteristics by striving to remove them from themselves through obtaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“Say, “Allah causes you to live, then causes you to die; then He will assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt...””***

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.

***“Say, “Allah causes you to live, then causes you to die; then He will assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt...””***

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.

***“Say, “Allah causes you to live, then causes you to die; then He will assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt...””***

The Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation on the Day of Judgment. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864.

This will cause people to sweat according to the deeds they performed during their lives on Earth. Some people's sweat will reach up to their ankles, some their knees and for others it will reach their mouths.

One only needs to ponder over the times they were subjected to intense summer weather and how the heat affected their attitude and behaviour. Through this one can imagine how difficult the situation on Judgment Day will be when the Sun is brought so close to them. This shows that those who strive hard and exert sincere efforts in the obedience 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, will find relaxation on Judgment Day. But those who were lazy and relaxed during their lives on Earth will be subjected to great stress on Judgment Day. Simply put, the one who strives here will relax there but the one who relaxes here will strive there in difficulty.

The same way people strive hard in this material world so that they obtain a comfortable life and even a comfortable retirement, even though

reaching this retirement age is not guaranteed, muslims should strive even harder in this world by obeying Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life so that they can obtain peace and comfort on a day that is guaranteed to occur. It is a sign of great ignorance to strive for a day one may never reach namely, the day of retirement, and not strive for a day they are guaranteed to reach and experience namely, Judgment Day.

***“Say, “Allah causes you to live, then causes you to die; then He will assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt...””***

People will be commanded to cross the Bridge which will be placed over Hell on the Day of Judgment. This has been discussed extensively in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6573. It warns that extremely large hooks will be on the Bridge which will affect people according to their deeds. Some will be flung into Hell by them, some will be subjected to great torture before they cross the Bridge, others will only face minimal injury from them and finally the righteous will not be harmed by them. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 455, warns that the Bridge is narrower than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword.

The important thing to learn from this is that each person will cross the Bridge according to their deeds. So it is important for Muslims not to neglect any duties if they desire to cross the Bridge safely. They must fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. These include duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. One should not neglect this and simply hope they will magically cross the Bridge unaffected.

In addition, the ease at which a person will cross this Bridge will be a mirror of how much they remained steadfast on the straight path of Islam in this world. This straight path is the path 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...”*

Anyone who abandons this path will not successfully cross this Bridge. Simply put, the more one remains steadfast on the straight path in this world the easier they will cross the Bridge over Hell on Judgment Day. The straight path has been made clear in this world so muslims are left with no excuses from following it thereby ensuring they safely cross the Bridge on Judgment Day.

***“Say, “Allah causes you to live, then causes you to die; then He will assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt...””***

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.

***“Say, “Allah causes you to live, then causes you to die; then He will assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt...””***

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.

***“Say, “Allah causes you to live, then causes you to die; then He will assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt, but most of the people do not know.””***

One must prepare for their Final Return by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Ignorance can prevent this preparation.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu’ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“Say, “Allah causes you to live, then causes you to die; then He will assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt, but most of the people do not know.””***

One must prepare for their Final Return by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Ignorance can prevent this preparation. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, their argument is only that they say, “Bring [back] our forefathers, if you should be truthful.” Say, “Allah causes you to live, then causes you to die; then He will assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt, but most of the people do not know.””***

This was a foolish demand the non-muslims of Mecca made to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as witnessing the resurrection of a dead person must remain unseen until the Day of Judgement otherwise belief in something which is apparent holds little value. This is why the acceptance of belief will not benefit a person when they observe the Angel of Death or on Judgement Day as the unseen has now become seen to them. In addition, just because something has not occurred then and there does not mean it will not happen later on.

The non-muslims of Mecca actually understood this truth yet uttered statements like this in order to misguide their ignorant followers and prevent them from accepting Islam.

The non-Muslims of Mecca spent their lives with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and full-well knew he was no liar. As they were masters of the Arabic language they full-well knew that the Holy Quran was not the words of a man.

For example, one of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, Walid Bin Mughira, once held a meeting with the other non-Muslim leaders of Mecca during the time of the Holy Pilgrimage. The Holy Pilgrimage did exist before the coming of Islam but the correct practices of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been completely changed. He advised the other leaders that soon many people would enter Mecca because of the Holy Pilgrimage and they will come across the message of Islam so they needed to unanimously agree on what to say about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to deter people from accepting Islam. Someone advised that they should label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a soothsayer. But Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not a soothsayer as he did not possess any of their crazy characteristics therefore people would not accept this. Another advised that they should tell people the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was crazy and was possessed by evil spirits. But Walid replied that it was obvious this was not true as these signs were not apparent in him. Finally, someone advised to label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a poet so that people would not pay attention to what he says. But again Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Quran or his speech were not poetry as the Arabs were masters of poetry. Walid advised everyone to claim that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a sorcerer whose goals were to cause separation between people and their religion and divisions within families. After agreeing to this plan they dispersed and waited for people to flood into Mecca for the Holy Pilgrimage and warned them not to pay attention to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they claimed he was a sorcerer. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 362.

In addition, as indicated by the main verses under discussion, when Allah, the Exalted, created mankind from nothing, resurrecting them from dust and bones will be easier for Him.

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verses 27-30

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُحْسِرُ  
الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

وَتَرَى كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ جَاثِيَةً كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَى إِلَى كِتَابِهَا الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ  
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

هَذَا كِتَابُنَا يَنْطِقُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنْسِخُ مَا كُنتُمْ  
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُدْخِلُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ فِي  
رَحْمَتِهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٣٠﴾

*“And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose.*

*And you will see every nation kneeling [from fear]. Every nation will be called to its record [and told], “Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do.”*

*This, Our record, speaks about you in truth. Indeed, We were having transcribed whatever you used to do.”*

*So as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them into His mercy. That is what is the clear attainment.”*

***“And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who possesses all sovereignty which is free of all defects. It is a sovereignty which has no beginning, no end, no reduction and no limit. Allah, the Exalted, has complete and total control over the creation through management and judgment without any limitations, partners or helpers. The King cannot be hindered or prevented from carrying out His will.

By accepting Allah, the Exalted, as the only King a muslim indirectly accepts their servanthood to Him. Therefore, they must fulfil all His commands and avoid all His prohibitions. A true servant never questions the wise decisions of the King and instead submits with full trust to His choices knowing that the wise King only decrees the best for His servant. 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.”*

When a muslim recognises Allah, the Exalted, as the King they will not turn to another when seeking help and instead only seek His support through sincere obedience to Him. They will always remember if they obey the King He will protect them from the creation. But if they obey the creation over Allah, the Exalted, the creation will not be able to protect them from the

punishment of the only King. This is indicated in a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. He declared that there is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator.

A muslim should adopt this characteristic according to their status by purifying their inner spiritual king namely, the spiritual heart through acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will cause their servants meaning, their bodily limbs, to obey their spiritual heart in acts of righteousness. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that if the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body will be pure but if the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body will become corrupt. One should not become a slave of their evil desires and instead become a true king which controls their desires according to the teachings of Islam.

Whoever perfects this will be given a spiritual kingdom in both worlds. The ultimate destination of the one who fulfils the rights of the King by perfecting servanthood has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. They will be granted a high station in the presence of the only Omnipotent King. Chapter 54 Al Qamar, verse 55:

*“In a seat of honour near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”*

***“...And the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose.”***

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for.

One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“...And the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose.”***

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.

***“...And the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose.”***

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 the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose.”***

The Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation on the Day of Judgment. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864.

This will cause people to sweat according to the deeds they performed during their lives on Earth. Some people's sweat will reach up to their ankles, some their knees and for others it will reach their mouths.

One only needs to ponder over the times they were subjected to intense summer weather and how the heat affected their attitude and behaviour. Through this one can imagine how difficult the situation on Judgment Day will be when the Sun is brought so close to them. This shows that those who strive hard and exert sincere efforts in the obedience 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, will find relaxation on Judgment Day. But those who were lazy and relaxed during their lives on Earth will be subjected to great stress on Judgment Day. Simply put, the one who strives here will relax there but the one who relaxes here will strive there in difficulty.

The same way people strive hard in this material world so that they obtain a comfortable life and even a comfortable retirement, even though reaching this retirement age is not guaranteed, muslims should strive even harder in this world by obeying Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of

their life so that they can obtain peace and comfort on a day that is guaranteed to occur. It is a sign of great ignorance to strive for a day one may never reach namely, the day of retirement, and not strive for a day they are guaranteed to reach and experience namely, Judgment Day.

***“...And the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose.”***

People will be commanded to cross the Bridge which will be placed over Hell on the Day of Judgment. This has been discussed extensively in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6573. It warns that extremely large hooks will be on the Bridge which will affect people according to their deeds. Some will be flung into Hell by them, some will be subjected to great torture before they cross the Bridge, others will only face minimal injury from them and finally the righteous will not be harmed by them. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 455, warns that the Bridge is narrower than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword.

The important thing to learn from this is that each person will cross the Bridge according to their deeds. So it is important for Muslims not to neglect any duties if they desire to cross the Bridge safely. They must fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. These include duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. One should not neglect this and simply hope they will magically cross the Bridge unaffected.

In addition, the ease at which a person will cross this Bridge will be a mirror of how much they remained steadfast on the straight path of Islam in this world. This straight path is the path 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...”*

Anyone who abandons this path will not successfully cross this Bridge. Simply put, the more one remains steadfast on the straight path in this world the easier they will cross the Bridge over Hell on Judgment Day. The straight path has been made clear in this world so muslims are left with no excuses from following it thereby ensuring they safely cross the Bridge on Judgment Day.

***“...And the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose.”***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches

Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

***“...And the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose.  
And you will see every nation kneeling [from fear]...”***

The kneeling will be a sign of the dominance of Allah, the Exalted, over them on the Day of Judgement. The one who kneels in this world to Him meaning, sincerely obeys Him, in this world will find the kneeling on that Day easy.

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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“...And the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose.  
And you will see every nation kneeling [from fear]...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who dominates over all things outwardly through infinite power and authority and inwardly through infinite knowledge and awareness.

The muslim who understands the outer and inner domination Allah, the Exalted, has over His creation will refrain from all acts of disobedience. They will not oppress others knowing they cannot escape the dominating force of Allah, the Exalted, even if they escape the force of worldly people, such as the police.

A muslim should act on this divine name by dominating over their inner evil and vain desires through the strength provided by Allah, the Exalted, which is only gained through His sincere obedience. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They should use this strength to remove all things which prevents them connecting to Allah, the Exalted.

The One who dominates all things is the only One who can provide a muslim the strength to overcome all difficulties they may face in both worlds. He is the only One who can provide them the strength to perform righteous deeds and abstain from sins. These three elements combined are required for a muslim to gain eternal success and they will be

granted to the muslim who sincerely obeys the Dominator, Allah, the Exalted.

***“...And the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose...Every nation will be called to its record [and told], "Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do. This, Our record, speaks about you in truth. Indeed, We were having transcribed whatever you used to do." So as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them into His mercy...”***

The difference between the falsifiers and those who proved their belief through actions is that the latter practically prepared for the Day of Judgement whereas the falsifiers did not.

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 the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose...Every nation will be called to its record [and told], "Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do. This, Our record, speaks about you in truth. Indeed, We were having transcribed whatever you used to do." So as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them into His mercy. That is what is the clear attainment.”***

The difference between the falsifiers and those who proved their belief through actions is that the latter practically prepared for the Day of Judgement whereas the falsifiers did not.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the

obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“...And the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose...Every nation will be called to its record [and told], "Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do. This, Our record, speaks about you in truth. Indeed, We were having transcribed whatever you used to do." So as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them into His mercy. That is what is the clear attainment.”***

The difference between the falsifiers and those who proved their belief through actions is that the latter practically prepared for the Day of Judgement whereas the falsifiers did not. 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 the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose...Every nation will be called to its record [and told], "Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do. This, Our record, speaks about you in truth. Indeed, We were having transcribed whatever you used to do." So as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them into His mercy. That is what is the clear attainment.”***

The difference between the falsifiers and those who proved their belief through actions is that the latter practically prepared for the Day of Judgement whereas the falsifiers did not.

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“...And the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose...Every nation will be called to its record [and told], "Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do. This, Our record, speaks about you in truth. Indeed, We were having transcribed whatever you used to do." So as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them into His mercy. That is what is the clear attainment.”***

The difference between the falsifiers and those who proved their belief through actions is that the latter practically prepared for the Day of Judgement whereas the falsifiers did not.

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a

muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“...And the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose...Every nation will be called to its record [and told], "Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do. This, Our record, speaks about you in truth. Indeed, We were having transcribed whatever you used to do." So as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them into His mercy. That is what is the clear attainment.”***

The difference between the falsifiers and those who proved their belief through actions is that the latter practically prepared for the Day of Judgement whereas the falsifiers did not.

In addition, every nation being called to its record can also be interpreted to mean that they will be called to their book. Meaning, the divine law granted to them through their Holy Prophet, peace be upon them. This divine law will be the measuring stick to which the nation's actions will be judged against.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy

Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“...And the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose...So as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them into His mercy. That is what is the clear attainment.”***

It is important for muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, "Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, "Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the*

*patient." And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves."*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. 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 the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose...So as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them into His mercy. That is what is the clear attainment.”***

Greatness and true success is not connected to worldly things, such as wealth or fame. A person may obtain some worldly success through these things but it is quite obvious if one turns the pages of history that this type of success is very temporary and it eventually becomes a burden and regret for a person. A muslim should never believe that superiority lies in these things thereby dedicating themselves to obtaining them while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Nor should they look down at others who do not possess these worldly things believing they have no value or significance as this attitude contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6071, that the people of Paradise are those who are considered insignificant by society and concluded that if they took an oath on something Allah, the Exalted, would fulfil it for them.

True honour, success and greatness in this world and the next only lies in piety. So the more one sincerely strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the greater they are even if they appear insignificant to society. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore search for true success in this and not waste their time and efforts in searching for it in worldly things otherwise they may well reach the hereafter a great loser. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

*“Say, “Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.””*

***“...And the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose...So as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them into His mercy. That is what is the clear attainment.”***

Every muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they barely know him as they are too busy to study his life, character and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

Chapter 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verses 31-35

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَفَلَمْ تَكُنْ ءَايَتِي تَتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ فَاَسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ  
وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

وَإِذَا قِيلَ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَالسَّاعَةُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا قُلْتُمْ مَا نَدْرِي  
مَا السَّاعَةُ إِنْ نَّظُنُّ إِلَّا ظَنًّا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُستَيْقِنِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

وَبَدَأَ لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ  
﴿٣٣﴾

وَقِيلَ الْيَوْمَ نَنسِفُكُمْ كَمَا نَسِفْنَا لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا وَمَأْوَنُكُمْ النَّارُ  
وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ نَّصِيرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

ذَٰلِكُمْ بِأَنكُمُ اتَّخَذْتُمْ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوًا وَغَرَّتْكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فَالْيَوْمَ  
لَا يُخْرَجُونَ مِنْهَا وَلَا هُمْ يُسْعَبُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

*“But as for those who disbelieved, [it will be said on Judgement Day],  
“Were not Our verses recited to you, but you were arrogant and became a  
criminal people?”*

*And when it was said, 'Indeed, the promise of Allah is truth and the Hour [is  
coming] - no doubt about it,' you said, 'We know not what is the Hour. We  
assume only assumption, and we are not convinced.’”*

*And the evil consequences of what they did will appear to them, and they  
will be enveloped by what they used to ridicule.*

*And it will be said, "Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of  
this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no  
helpers.*

*That is because you took the signs of Allah in ridicule, and worldly life  
deluded you." So that Day they will not be removed from it, nor will they be  
asked to appease [Allah].”*

***“But as for those who disbelieved, [it will be said on Judgement Day],  
“Were not Our verses recited to you, but you were arrogant...””***

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.

***“But as for those who disbelieved, [it will be said on Judgement Day],  
"Were not Our verses recited to you, but you were arrogant and  
became a criminal people?"”***

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.

***“But as for those who disbelieved, [it will be said on Judgement Day],  
“...And when it was said, 'Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth and the  
Hour [is coming] - no doubt about it,' you said, 'We know not what is  
the Hour. We assume only assumption, and we are not convinced.'””***

Acknowledging the reality of the Day of Judgement would mean that they would need to live their life according to a specific code of conduct in order to prepare for it. As this would prevent them from fulfilling their desires they arrogantly and foolishly rejected it.

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly

disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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.

***“But as for those who disbelieved, [it will be said on Judgement Day],  
"Were not Our verses recited to you, but you were arrogant and  
became a criminal people?...And the evil consequences of what they  
did will appear to them, and they will be enveloped by what they used  
to ridicule.”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed

her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“But as for those who disbelieved, [it will be said on Judgement Day],  
"Were not Our verses recited to you, but you were arrogant and  
became a criminal people?...And the evil consequences of what they  
did will appear to them, and they will be enveloped by what they used  
to ridicule.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their

victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“But as for those who disbelieved, [it will be said on Judgement Day],  
“Were not Our verses recited to you, but you were arrogant and  
became a criminal people?...And the evil consequences of what they  
did will appear to them, and they will be enveloped by what they used  
to ridicule.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“And it will be said, “Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers.””***

Forgetting the Day of Judgement includes failing to practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“And it will be said, “Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers.””***

Forgetting the Day of Judgement includes failing to practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has 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 it will be said, “Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers.””***

Forgetting the Day of Judgement includes failing to practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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.

***“And it will be said, “Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers.””***

Forgetting the Day of Judgement includes failing to practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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 it will be said, “Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers.””***

Forgetting the Day of Judgement includes failing to practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

The Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation on the Day of Judgment. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864.

This will cause people to sweat according to the deeds they performed during their lives on Earth. Some people's sweat will reach up to their ankles, some their knees and for others it will reach their mouths.

One only needs to ponder over the times they were subjected to intense summer weather and how the heat affected their attitude and behaviour. Through this one can imagine how difficult the situation on Judgment Day will be when the Sun is brought so close to them. This shows that those who strive hard and exert sincere efforts in the obedience 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, will find relaxation on Judgment Day. But those who were lazy and relaxed during their lives on Earth will be subjected to great stress on Judgment

Day. Simply put, the one who strives here will relax there but the one who relaxes here will strive there in difficulty.

The same way people strive hard in this material world so that they obtain a comfortable life and even a comfortable retirement, even though reaching this retirement age is not guaranteed, muslims should strive even harder in this world by obeying Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life so that they can obtain peace and comfort on a day that is guaranteed to occur. It is a sign of great ignorance to strive for a day one may never reach namely, the day of retirement, and not strive for a day they are guaranteed to reach and experience namely, Judgment Day.

***“And it will be said, “Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers.””***

Forgetting the Day of Judgement includes failing to practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

People will be commanded to cross the Bridge which will be placed over Hell on the Day of Judgment. This has been discussed extensively in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6573. It warns that extremely large hooks will be on the Bridge which will affect people according to their deeds. Some will be flung into Hell by them, some will be subjected to great torture before they cross the Bridge, others will only face minimal injury from them and finally the righteous will not be harmed by them. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 455, warns that the Bridge is narrower than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword.

The important thing to learn from this is that each person will cross the Bridge according to their deeds. So it is important for muslims not to neglect any duties if they desire to cross the Bridge safely. They must fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. These include duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. One should not neglect this and simply hope they will magically cross the Bridge unaffected.

In addition, the ease at which a person will cross this Bridge will be a mirror of how much they remained steadfast on the straight path of Islam in this world. This straight path is the path 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...”*

Anyone who abandons this path will not successfully cross this Bridge. Simply put, the more one remains steadfast on the straight path in this world the easier they will cross the Bridge over Hell on Judgment Day. The straight path has been made clear in this world so muslims are left with no excuses from following it thereby ensuring they safely cross the Bridge on Judgment Day.

***“And it will be said, “Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers.”...So that Day they will not be removed from it, nor will they be asked to appease [Allāh].”***

Forgetting the Day of Judgement includes failing to practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before

their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

***“And it will be said, “Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers.”...So that Day they will not be removed from it, nor will they be asked to appease [Allāh].”***

Forgetting the Day of Judgement includes failing to practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

It is important for muslims to understand that whenever they face any type of worldly failure or regrets they should remind themselves of the regrets in the hereafter some people will have, such as the one mentioned in chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

*“He will say, “Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.””*

In this world one's regret will always be followed by another chance or other options which they can pursue in order to gain success once again. But the regret and failure of the hereafter is something which cannot be rectified meaning, there are no second chances in the next world. No one will have the opportunity to return to Earth in order to act differently.

Therefore, every muslim should be more concerned with the failures they may encounter in the hereafter over the failures and regrets of this world. This does not mean one should not strive to achieve lawful success in this world. It means they should always prioritise gaining success in the hereafter over gaining success in this world. This is an important mentality muslims should adopt before they reach a day where reflecting on their failures and regrets will not help them in the slightest. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“But as for those who disbelieved, [it will be said on Judgement Day], “Were not Our verses recited to you, but you were arrogant and became a criminal people?...And it will be said, “Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers. That is because you took the signs of Allah in ridicule, and worldly life deluded you.” So that Day they will not be removed from it, nor will they be asked to appease [Allah].”***

The worldly life deludes the person by convincing them to fully focus on fulfilling their desires thereby ignoring the two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must avoid this behaviour and instead sincerely obey and follow the two sources of guidance so that they obtain peace and success in both worlds.

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

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the

Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

***“But as for those who disbelieved, [it will be said on Judgement Day], “Were not Our verses recited to you, but you were arrogant and became a criminal people?...And it will be said, “Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers. That is because you took the signs of Allah in ridicule, and worldly life deluded you.” So that Day they will not be removed from it, nor will they be asked to appease [Allah].”***

The worldly life deludes the person by convincing them to fully focus on fulfilling their desires thereby ignoring the two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. An aspect of this delusion is possessing wishful thinking in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails

to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey 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 whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

A specific type of wishful thinking which affected the past nations and even the muslim nation is when a person believes that they can ignore the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, and somehow someone on the Day of Judgement will intercede for them and save them from Hell. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact and has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less even with his intercession some muslims whose punishment will be reduced by it will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil convinces those who do not believe in Judgement Day that even if it occurs they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on that day by claiming that they were not so bad as they avoided major crimes such as murder. They have convinced themselves that their pleas will be accepted and they will be sent to Paradise even though they disbelieved in Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. This is incredibly foolish as Allah, the Exalted, will not treat the person who believed in Him and tried to obey him like the one who disbelieved in Him. A single verse has erased this type of wishful thinking. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

*“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”*

***“But as for those who disbelieved, [it will be said on Judgement Day], “Were not Our verses recited to you, but you were arrogant and became a criminal people?...And it will be said, “Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers. That is because you took the signs of Allah in ridicule, and worldly life deluded you.” So that Day they will not be removed from it, nor will they be asked to appease [Allah].”***

The worldly life deludes the person by convincing them to fully focus on fulfilling their desires thereby ignoring the two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The root of this delusion is ignorance.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu’ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“But as for those who disbelieved, [it will be said on Judgement Day], “Were not Our verses recited to you, but you were arrogant and became a criminal people?...And it will be said, “Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers. That is because you took the signs of Allah in ridicule, and worldly life deluded you.” So that Day they will not be removed from it, nor will they be asked to appease [Allah].”***

The worldly life deludes the person by convincing them to fully focus on fulfilling their desires thereby ignoring the two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The root of this delusion is ignorance. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the

Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“But as for those who disbelieved, [it will be said on Judgement Day], “Were not Our verses recited to you, but you were arrogant and became a criminal people?...And it will be said, “Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers. That is because you took the signs of Allah in ridicule, and worldly life deluded you.” So that Day they will not be removed from it, nor will they be asked to appease [Allah].”***

The worldly life deludes the person by convincing them to fully focus on fulfilling their desires thereby ignoring the two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. An aspect of this delusion is believing one can practically prepare for the Day of Judgement at a later date.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

*“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.” But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”*

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

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The worldly life deludes the person by convincing them to fully focus on fulfilling their desires thereby ignoring the two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite

evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“But as for those who disbelieved, [it will be said on Judgement Day], “Were not Our verses recited to you, but you were arrogant and became a criminal people?...And it will be said, “Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers. That is because you took the signs of Allah in ridicule, and worldly life deluded you.” So that Day they will not be removed from it, nor will they be asked to appease [Allah].”***

The worldly life deludes the person by convincing them to fully focus on fulfilling their desires thereby ignoring the two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. An aspect of this delusion is believing that one does not need to prove their declaration of belief through actions.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically.

Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“But as for those who disbelieved, [it will be said on Judgement Day],  
"Were not Our verses recited to you, but you were arrogant and  
became a criminal people?...And it will be said, "Today We will forget  
you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is  
the Fire, and for you there are no helpers. That is because you took  
the signs of Allah in ridicule, and worldly life deluded you." So that  
Day they will not be removed from it, nor will they be asked to  
appease [Allah].”***

The worldly life deludes the person by convincing them to fully focus on fulfilling their desires thereby ignoring the two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent

will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas

the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

Chapter 45 – Al Jathiyah, Verses 36-37 of 37

فَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَرَبِّ الْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَلَهُ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾

*“Then, to Allah belongs [all] praise - Lord of the heavens and Lord of the earth, Lord of the worlds.*

*And to Him belongs [all] grandeur within the heavens and the earth, and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.”*

***“Then, to Allah belongs [all] praise...”***

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.”*

***“Then, to Allah belongs [all] praise...”***

All praise is only for Allah, the Exalted, as He created and continuously sustains the entire creation within the Heavens and Earth without any progeny, partner, or helper. His kindness in the form of countless blessings, such as faith, to the creation has no limits. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 18:

*"And if you should count the favors of Allah, you could not enumerate them...."*

Therefore, the creation should constantly praise Him through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Allah, the Exalted, is worthy of all praise, as He is full of perfection in terms of attributes and characteristics which are free from all shortcomings. This is still true even if He did not bestow any blessings on the creation. In addition, praising Allah, the Exalted, with the tongue and actions through sincere obedience is a means to increase the blessings one receives. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

A muslim should praise Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible as it is has been declared the best supplication by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3800. In addition, this verse reminds mankind that whatever praise-worthy quality a person observes in the creation or within themselves is only possible because Allah, the Exalted, granted it. Therefore, all praise returns and solely belongs to Allah, the Exalted.

***“...Lord of the heavens and Lord of the earth, Lord of the worlds.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord of the Worlds as He is the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe. He has full control over every single entity from the smallest atom to the largest creation such as the divine throne. Except for a few members of the creation every atom in existence recognises and acknowledges this great fact and thus continuously praises Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 44:

*"The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them exalt Him. And there is not a thing except that it exalts [Allah] by His praise, but you do not understand their [way of] exalting..."*

No creature has the power to free themselves of His Lordship whether they believe in Him or not. His Lordship has no equivalent as it includes all of creation. It has no beginning, no end and no decline in authority or control. Allah, the Exalted, in His infinite knowledge knew the weakness of the creation in praising Him, according to His infinite status, so out of mercy He declared how to praise Him in this verse. Otherwise, how can a finite creature praise the Creator, according to His infinite status, without aid from Allah, the Exalted? This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 879.

As Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord of the universe He must be obeyed and never disobeyed. A muslim must only be obedient to others when it involves the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Acknowledging the Lordship of Allah, the Exalted, includes acknowledging one's servanthood to Him. This in itself is a clear declaration that a muslim must not chart their own course in life but they must simply adhere to the commands of their Lord, Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a muslim should never declare their servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, by declaring His Lordship through their words and then contradict their declaration through their actions. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 23-24:

*"Pharaoh said: "And who is this Lord of the Universe? Moses answered: "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and of all that is between them, if you were only to believe.""*

***“...Lord of the heavens and Lord of the earth, Lord of the worlds.”***

This verse is connected to chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

*“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware.””*

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere 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.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a muslim has a choice between pleasing

Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments, enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person's heart indicates that it is a duty on muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a muslim. Certainty of faith allows a muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“And to Him belongs [all] grandeur within the heavens and the earth...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is tremendous in attributes and essence beyond the perception and understanding of all.

The one who understands this divine name will observe all things which are not connected to Allah, the Exalted, as small and insignificant. The commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, will be tremendous in their sight so they hasten in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while putting aside all things which can hinder them in this task.

A muslim should act on this divine name by adopting humility as all are humbled before the Greatness of Allah, the Exalted. They should demonstrate humility towards Allah, the Exalted, and towards the creation without showing signs of weakness. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, whoever humbles themselves for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. A muslim should also make their aspirations tremendous by only acting for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and nothing else so that they reach a tremendous station in the presence of an Omnipotent King. Chapter 54 Al Qamar, verse 55:

*“In a seat of honour near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”*

***“And to Him belongs [all] grandeur within the heavens and the earth...”***

Pride only belongs to Allah, the Exalted, due to His supreme and infinite majesty, greatness, glory and magnificence which are free from any faults or defects.

No creation should adopt pride as in reality they have nothing to be proud of. Anything good they possess has been created and granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The inspiration, knowledge, strength and opportunity to perform good deeds and refrain from sins only comes from Allah, the Exalted. Pride must be avoided as anyone who possesses even an atom's worth of it shall enter Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, Number 266.

As being proud befits only Allah, the Exalted, muslims should therefore adopt humility. This humility should be shown by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is a vital aspect of servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, which is the greatest station a muslim can reach.

Whoever shows such humility for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be raised in rank by Him. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6592. One should show humility without weakness towards others

for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and never believe themselves to be better than others as the end result of their life or the lives of others is unknown. An aspect of humility is to accept the truth and act on it irrespective of who it comes from.

***“...and He is the Exalted in Might...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who over powers all things, who in reality is the only One who possesses power and might. Anyone else who possesses strength only does so because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. There is no atom in this world or in the next that can escape the power and authority of Allah, the Exalted.

As all power belongs to Allah, the Exalted, a muslim should therefore always remember that the strength to perform righteous deeds and refrain from sins comes from Allah, the Exalted, alone. This will remove any chance of pride creeping into their heart. An atom's worth of which is enough to take a person to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Whoever desires for their faith to become mighty must obey the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be granted strong faith which will aid them to overcome all difficulties so that they leave this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. True obedience only lies in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. 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.”*

Truly Knowing Allah, the Exalted, is All Mighty should prevent a muslim from sinning. As they should know there is no way to escape the might of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, when a muslim engraves this divine name into their heart it prevents them from committing oppression and wronging others. They become fully aware that even if there is no person powerful enough to seek justice from them Allah, the Exalted, will certainly take them to account and punish them in both worlds. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, oppression to others may cause the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted, to hurl them into Hell on Judgment Day.

***“...He is...the Wise.”***

Allah, the Exalted, possesses infinite knowledge of all things and their real nature and acts according to His infinite wisdom in a perfect manner. The muslim who understands this divine name will never object to His choices and decrees knowing that there is wisdom behind each choice of Allah, the Exalted, which benefits His servants even if they are not obvious to 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 act on this divine name by using their knowledge and blessings according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, as this is the ultimate wisdom a person can possess.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verse 1**



“Ḥā, Meem.”

## **“Ḥā, Meem.”**

Even though the actual meaning of these verses found within the Holy Quran are unknown using letters from the alphabet does indicate the importance of education and knowledge.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

## Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verse 2

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿٢﴾

*“The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.”*

***“The revelation of the Book is from Allah...”***

The Holy Quran has been revealed for the guidance of mankind. But one will only be rightly guided by it when they fulfil its rights.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete

loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“...Allāh, the Exalted in Might...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who over powers all things, who in reality is the only One who possesses power and might. Anyone else who possesses strength only does so because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. There is no atom in this world or in the next that can escape the power and authority of Allah, the Exalted.

As all power belongs to Allah, the Exalted, a muslim should therefore always remember that the strength to perform righteous deeds and refrain from sins comes from Allah, the Exalted, alone. This will remove any chance of pride creeping into their heart. An atom's worth of which is enough to take a person to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Whoever desires for their faith to become mighty must obey the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be granted strong faith which will aid them to overcome all difficulties so that they leave this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. True obedience only lies in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. 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.”*

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***“...Allāh...the Wise.”***

Allah, the Exalted, possesses infinite knowledge of all things and their real nature and acts according to His infinite wisdom in a perfect manner. The muslim who understands this divine name will never object to His choices and decrees knowing that there is wisdom behind each choice of Allah, the Exalted, which benefits His servants even if they are not obvious to 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 act on this divine name by using their knowledge and blessings according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, as this is the ultimate wisdom a person can possess.

### Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verse 3

مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ  
مُسَمًّى وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَمَّا أُنذَرُوا مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣﴾

*“We did not create the heavens and earth and what is between them except in truth [with purpose] and [for] a specified term. But those who disbelieve, from that of which they are warned, are turning away.”*

***“We did not create the heavens and earth and what is between them except in truth [with purpose] and [for] a specified term...”***

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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.

***“We did not create the heavens and earth and what is between them except in truth [with purpose] and [for] a specified term...”***

Everything within the Heavens and Earth clearly indicate that everything that has a beginning has an end, such as the coming and going of the days, night, weeks, months and years.

Therefore, muslims must remember their own appointed time and prepare for it.

Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The only way

to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

***“We did not create the heavens and earth and what is between them except in truth [with purpose] and [for] a specified term...”***

Everything within the Heavens and Earth clearly indicate that everything that has a beginning has an end, such as the coming and going of the days, night, weeks, months and years.

Therefore, muslims must remember their own appointed time and prepare for it.

It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of the material world. Unfortunately, muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared.

It is important for muslims to understand that no matter how long they live life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of

Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A muslim only fails preparing for the hereafter correctly because of their pursuit of the excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities.

A muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“We did not create the heavens and earth and what is between them except in truth [with purpose] and [for] a specified term...”***

Everything within the Heavens and Earth clearly indicate that everything that has a beginning has an end, such as the coming and going of the days, night, weeks, months and years.

Therefore, muslims must remember their own appointed time and prepare for it.

When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing. Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim they stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that they stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, muslims do not treat it like one. Instead, they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.

***“We did not create the heavens and earth and what is between them except in truth [with purpose] and [for] a specified term...”***

Everything within the Heavens and Earth clearly indicate that everything that has a beginning has an end, such as the coming and going of the days, night, weeks, months and years.

Therefore, muslims must remember their own appointed time and prepare for it.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

*“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.” But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”*

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

***“We did not create the heavens and earth and what is between them except in truth [with purpose] and [for] a specified term. But those who disbelieve, from that of which they are warned, are turning away.”***

Everything within the Heavens and Earth clearly indicate that everything that has a beginning has an end, such as the coming and going of the days, night, weeks, months and years. When everything ends it will lead to the Day of Judgement where everyone will face the consequences of their actions.

It is important to note, that one can turn away from the warning of the Day of Judgment even if they believe in it by failing to practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“We did not create the heavens and earth and what is between them except in truth [with purpose] and [for] a specified term. But those who disbelieve, from that of which they are warned, are turning away.”***

Everything within the Heavens and Earth clearly indicate that everything that has a beginning has an end, such as the coming and going of the days, night, weeks, months and years. When everything ends it will lead to the Day of Judgement where everyone will face the consequences of their actions.

It is important to note, that one can turn away from the warning of the Day of Judgment even if they believe in it by failing to practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“We did not create the heavens and earth and what is between them except in truth [with purpose] and [for] a specified term. But those who disbelieve, from that of which they are warned, are turning away.”***

Everything within the Heavens and Earth clearly indicate that everything that has a beginning has an end, such as the coming and going of the days, night, weeks, months and years. When everything ends it will lead to the Day of Judgement where everyone will face the consequences of their actions.

It is important to note, that one can turn away from the warning of the Day of Judgment even if they believe in it by failing to practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“...But those who disbelieve, from that of which they are warned, are turning away.”***

This verse indicates the importance of implementing the teachings of Islam as reminders namely; glad tidings and warnings only benefit the person who acts on them. For example, those who ignore road hazard signs are often the ones who end up in dangerous situations. But those who act upon these hazards signs are protected from this danger. The glad tidings indicate the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon lead to the gardens of Paradise. And the warnings are the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon protects one from divine punishment such as Hell.

## Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verses 4-6

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ  
الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ ۗ أَتُنُونِي بِكِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ  
هَذَا أَوْ أَثَرَةٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤﴾

وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن يَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَن لَّا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ  
إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ عَن دُعَائِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ ﴿٥﴾

وَإِذَا حُشِرَ النَّاسُ كَانُوا لَهُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَكَانُوا بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ ﴿٦﴾

*“Say, "Have you considered that which you invoke besides Allah? Show me what they have created of the earth; or did they have partnership in [creation of] the heavens? Bring me a scripture [revealed] before this or a [remaining] trace of knowledge, if you should be truthful.”*

*And who is more astray than he who invokes besides Allah those who will not respond to him until the Day of Resurrection, and they, of their invocation, are unaware.*

*And when the people are gathered [that Day], they [who were invoked] will be enemies to them, and they will be deniers of their worship.”*

***“Say, “Have you considered that which you invoke besides Allah?...””***

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.

***“Say, “Have you considered that which you invoke besides Allah? Show me what they have created of the earth; or did they have partnership in [creation of] the heavens? Bring me a scripture [revealed] before this or a [remaining] trace of knowledge, if you should be truthful.””***

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

***“Say, “Have you considered that which you invoke besides Allah? Show me what they have created of the earth; or did they have partnership in the heavens? Bring me a scripture [revealed] before this or a [remaining] trace of knowledge, if you should be truthful.””***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, there are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But there are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

***“Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”***

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain

some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

***“Say, “Have you considered that which you invoke besides Allah? Show me what they have created of the earth; or did they have partnership in [creation of] the heavens? Bring me a scripture [revealed] before this or a [remaining] trace of knowledge, if you should be truthful.””***

A major cause of adopting polytheism is blindly imitating others.

A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation.

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.

***“Say, “Have you considered that which you invoke besides Allah? Show me what they have created of the earth; or did they have partnership in [creation of] the heavens? Bring me a scripture [revealed] before this or a [remaining] trace of knowledge, if you should be truthful.””***

A major cause of adopting polytheism is blindly imitating others.

A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation. Blind imitation is even disliked within Islam.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

*“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”*

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five daily obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.

***“And who is more astray than he who invokes besides Allāh those who will not respond to him until the Day of Resurrection and they, of their invocation, are unaware. And when the people are gathered [that Day], they [who were invoked] will be enemies to them, and they will be deniers of their worship.”***

This verse is connected to chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 62-63:

*“And [warn of] the Day He will call them and say, "Where are My 'partners' which you used to claim?" Those upon whom the word will have come into effect will say, "Our Lord, these are the ones we led to error. We led them to error just as we were in error. We declare our disassociation [from them] to You. They did not used to worship [i.e., obey] us.””*

The idols will reject the people who worshipped them as the truth is that each idol worshipper only worshipped their own desires. The idols were just a physical manifestation of their desires which they worshipped. This is obvious as a person who worships an idol knows that the lifeless idol cannot command them to live their life a certain way so the worshiper themselves decides how they imagine their lifeless idol would like them to live. And this code of conduct is based on nothing but their own desires. Therefore, their worship of their desires is the root of their idol worshipping which their idols will remind them of on Judgement Day.

So in this respect any desire which distracts one from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, becomes an idol.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their

worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

## Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verses 7-8

وَإِذَا نُتِلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ءآيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا  
جَاءَهُمْ هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٧﴾

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ إِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهُ، فَلَا تَمْلِكُونَ لِي مِنَ اللَّهِ  
شَيْئًا هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ كَفَىٰ بِهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ  
وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٨﴾

*“And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, those who disbelieve say of the truth when it has come to them, “This is obvious magic.”*

*Or do they say, “He has invented it”? Say, “If I have invented it, you will not possess for me [the power of protection] from Allah at all. He is most knowing of that in which you are involved. Sufficient is He as Witness between me and you, and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”*

***“And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, those who disbelieve say of the truth when it has come to them...”***

One will only benefit from the clear proofs of the Holy Quran when they fulfil its rights.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete

loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, those who disbelieve say of the truth when it has come to them...”***

The Holy Quran possesses an uncountable amount of qualities which separates it from any other worldly book. This aspect of the Holy Quran is so intense that it cannot even be explained or discussed over countless lifetimes. But a few of these qualities will be mentioned here. First of all, in the Holy Quran, Allah, the Exalted, has given an open challenge to the entire universe (not just people) and not only a challenge to those who were present when this divine revelation was revealed but to all of creation till the end of time. The challenge being if the people believed the Holy Quran was not a divine revelation from Allah, the Exalted, then they should produce a chapter that can rival a chapter of the Holy Quran. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 23:

*“And if you are in some doubt, concerning what We sent down upon Our special devotee, then bring one chapter like it, and call upon all your helpers beside Allah, if you are truthful.”*

There is no book on the entire planet that can and has given this type of open challenge. But over 1400 years ago the Holy Quran gave this challenge to the entire universe and to this day this challenge has not been won by the non-Muslims nor will it ever be God willing.

Another quality of the Holy Quran is that it stated the outcome of future events. But the more amazing thing about these statements is that the outcomes seemed impossible at the time. For example chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 28:

*“It is He Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth that he may make it prevail over all other religions And Sufficient is Allah as witness.”*

When this verse was revealed the entire city of Mecca was Islam so when the people of Mecca heard this verse, unfortunately for them, they believed that Islam was too feeble and would therefore not survive long and certainly would not spread beyond the borders of Mecca let alone the entire world. But within a some years Allah, the Exalted, fulfilled this promise.

Another example of how the Holy Quran prophesied a future event which was unimaginable at the time is found in chapter 30 Ar Rum, verses 2-5:

*“The Romans have been subdued. In the nearby land and after their subjugation they will soon overcome. In a few years. The command is of Allah only before and after. And on that day the believers shall rejoice. With the help of Allah, He helps whom He pleases. And He is the Might, and Merciful.”*

These verses of the Holy Quran were revealed during a time where the Romans (Christians) were at war with the Persians (Fire worshippers). This war has been confirmed by many authentic historic books. At this particular time the Persians were on the verge of winning the war. At one point Rome itself was surrounded by the Persians. But Allah, the Exalted, stated that the Romans would eventually reign victorious. The non-Muslims of Mecca who themselves were idol worshippers favoured the Persians and agreed with the majority that it was impossible for the Romans to win. But Allah, the Exalted, as always proved these verses true and allowed the Romans victory.

A final example which appeals to the scientists of the world is seen in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 33:

*“And it is He Who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon. Each one is floating in a circumference.”*

For centuries scientists have fought over theories on how exactly the solar system is arranged e.g. whether the sun remains still and the Earth rotates around or vice versa. Only relatively recently it has been proven by scientists from all different faiths and backgrounds that each object; sun, moon and the Earth all rotate on their own axes and rotate around each other in a set orbit. But Allah, the Exalted, declared this over 1400 years ago. All the science related verses of the Holy Quran are slowly being proven by scientists today. This is a huge piece of evidence that proves

that the Holy Quran are the words of the One and only true God, Allah, the Exalted, who has created this universe and everything in it, because only a Creator can truly explain his creations.

Even though many commands of the Holy Quran may not be understood by people does not mean they are incorrect. Certain verses of the Holy Quran whose wisdom was hidden to man became apparent when society reached a certain level of development. As the whole Holy Quran is a book of wisdom and guidance it must be accepted irrespective if one understands its commands or not. This situation is just like a child who is suffering from a cold and desires ice cream but is not given it by their parent. The child will continue to cry without understanding the wisdom behind but those that possess knowledge will agree with the parent even though outwardly it appears as if the decision of the parent is wronging the child.

When studying the Holy Quran one will realize that it contains different levels of superiority through both obvious and subtle meanings that it discusses. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 1:

*“...[This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise and Aware.”*

The expressions in it are unparalleled and its meanings are explained in a simple straight forward way. Its verses are extremely eloquent and no other text can surpass it. The Holy Quran also mentioned the stories of the previous nations in detail even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not educated in history. It commanded every type of good and forbade every type of evil, those that affect an individual and those that affect an entire society so that peace and security can spread throughout homes and society. The Holy Quran is free from exaggerations, lies or falsehood unlike poems and stories. All the verses, whether short or long, in the Holy Quran are beneficial. Even when the same story is repeated in the Holy Quran different important lessons can be learned from it. Unlike all other books the Holy Quran does not become boring when it is repeatedly recited and a seeker of truth never gets fed up of studying it. The Holy Quran not only provides warnings and promises but supports them with unshakeable and clear proofs. When the Holy Quran discusses anything which can seem abstract, such as adopting patience, it always provides an easy and practical way of implementing it. It encourages one to fulfil the purpose of their creation and prepare for the eternal hereafter in a simple yet profound way. It makes the straight path clear and appealing to the one who desires true success in both worlds. The knowledge within it is timeless and can be applied to every society and age. It is a healing for every emotional, economical and physical difficulty when it is understood and applied correctly. It is the cure for every problem an individual or an entire society can ever encounter. One only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the societies which implemented the teachings of the Holy Quran correctly in order to understand its all encompassing benefits. Centuries have passed yet not even a single letter has been edited in the Holy Quran as Allah, the Exalted, promised to safeguard it. No other book in history possesses this quality. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 9:

*“Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [i.e., the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian.”*

This is undoubtedly the greatest and timeless miracle of Allah, the Exalted, granted to His final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But the only one who will benefit from it is the one who seeks the truth whereas the seekers of their desires will only find it difficult to hear and follow. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

***“And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, those who disbelieve say of the truth when it has come to them, "This is obvious magic."”***

It is important for muslims especially, in this day and age to understand the difference between those who discuss certain topics which may be considered controversial in order to genuinely benefit people through a positive change and those who simply discuss these issues in order to attract the attention of others. Those who desire a positive change in society will always show respect and good character towards others especially, to those they are challenging through their words. They never result to vulgar language or actions in order to declare their point of view. They instead study and understand the subject they are debating about without misinterpreting or falsifying information in order to support their point of view. Their criticism is always constructive and their genuine and sincere intention to improve the society is shown through their behaviour and words. These are the people who muslims should pay attention to as if they are correct it will improve society for everyone. But if their viewpoint is wrong they will accept the truth when it is made clear to them by others. But those who behave opposite to this correct attitude, whether they are found in the media or anywhere else, should simply be ignored as they do not desire to improve the lives of people. They are starved for attention and like an infant act out in order to attract some attention from others. Muslims should not circulate and pass on videos or other content which are linked to people like this as they are playing right into their hands and giving them the attention they so badly desire. Debating with these people is a complete waste of time because of their evil intention and behaviour. Muslims should instead place their efforts in other useful places which benefit them and others in both worlds.

***“And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, those who disbelieve say of the truth when it has come to them, "This is obvious magic."”***

The Holy Quran teaches mankind that certain people are so drowned in the material world no advice will penetrate their veiled hearts. The Holy Quran describes how this group of people possesses hearts harder than rocks. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

*“Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder...”*

At this point those who desire to spread the word of Islam should separate from this type of person and instead concentrate on others. But it is important to note, even in this case a muslim should always demonstrate good character towards the sinful as they can repent at anytime. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

*“...and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace.”*

Similarly, in another verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that when a limit is reached it is best to separate and leave the stubborn and misguided people to their false beliefs. A day will undoubtedly come when Allah, the Exalted, will inform mankind who was rightly guided and who was lost in darkness. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 55:

*“And when they hear ill speech, they turn away from it and say, "For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. Peace will be upon you; we seek not the ignorant.”*

Muslims should never get depressed and confused when their good advice does not affect others. In some cases, these people are drowned in sins to such an extent their heart becomes veiled. This veil prevents the good advice affecting them in a positive way. A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, explains how a sin causes a black spot to be etched onto the spiritual heart. The more one sins the more their spiritual heart becomes engrossed by this darkness. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

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

This is similar to another verse where Allah, the Exalted, declares that their ears, eyes and hearts have been veiled from the truth and they therefore cannot be guided to the truth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 7:

*“Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil...”*

The fault does not lie with the message of Islam but in the hearts of the misguided. Just like the fault lies in the eyes of a blind person and not the bright Sun. Unfortunately, this stubborn attitude has become a widespread problem within society. Some of these people believe in Islam yet have closed their hearts and minds to the teachings of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They refuse to accept any good advice which would benefit them in both worlds.

Those who choose to spread the word of Islam should understand that there are two types of mind-sets people can adopt. The first is when someone makes their mind up beforehand about an issue and then searches and accepts only those things which support their predetermined belief. Whereas, the correct attitude is to live with an open mind by searching and accepting strong evidence regarding different issues. The first mentality will only cause problems from a personal level right up to a national level. Unfortunately, this is how some aspects of the media work. They predetermine the information they would like to publish, find bits of weak supporting evidence and then blow it out of proportion for the world to see. Those spreading the word of Islam should avoid the first type of people and instead concentrate on inviting the second group towards the truth.

***“And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, those who disbelieve say of the truth when it has come to them, "This is obvious magic." Or do they say, "He has invented it"? Say, "If I have invented it, you will not possess for me [the power of protection] from Allāh at all. He is most knowing of that in which you are involved...””***

The non-Muslims of Mecca spent their lives with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and full-well knew he was no liar. As they were masters of the Arabic language they full-well knew that the Holy Quran was not the words of a man. They only uttered foolish statements like these in order to put off others from accepting Islam.

For example, one of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, Walid Bin Mughira, once held a meeting with the other non-Muslim leaders of Mecca during the time of the Holy Pilgrimage. The Holy Pilgrimage did exist before the coming of Islam but the correct practices of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been completely changed. He advised the other leaders that soon many people would enter Mecca because of the Holy Pilgrimage and they will come across the message of Islam so they needed to unanimously agree on what to say about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to deter people from accepting Islam. Someone advised that they should label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a soothsayer. But Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not a soothsayer as he did not possess any of their crazy characteristics therefore people would not accept this. Another advised that they should tell people the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was crazy and was possessed by evil spirits. But Walid replied that it was obvious this was not true as these signs were

not apparent in him. Finally, someone advised to label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a poet so that people would not pay attention to what he says. But again Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Quran or his speech were not poetry as the Arabs were masters of poetry. Walid advised everyone to claim that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a sorcerer whose goals were to cause separation between people and their religion and divisions within families. After agreeing to this plan they dispersed and waited for people to flood into Mecca for the Holy Pilgrimage and warned them not to pay attention to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they claimed he was a sorcerer. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 362.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was reciting truthful historical accounts and beneficial lessons even though he was unlettered and had not studied the previous divine scriptures, which the non-Muslims of Mecca full well knew, was a clear sign of his Prophethood.

This was supported by the fact that they themselves testified to his sincerity and honesty. In fact, during his childhood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always under the protection of Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the evils that were widespread during the age of ignorance: the time before Islam. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached maturity he was the finest person among his people, the best of them in character and repute, the best of neighbours, the most prudent, the most honest in speech and most trustworthy. He was completely removed from

immorality and other evil characteristics. Because of this he became known among the people of Mecca as Al Amin, the trustworthy. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, The Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 180.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spent his entire life amongst the non-Muslims of Mecca was enough of a proof of his declaration of Prophethood. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, invited the non-Muslims of Mecca to embrace Islam he used his 40 years amongst them as proof that he was speaking the truth. This evidence was undeniable even by the non-Muslims. This incident is recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4553. Only the arrogance of some prevented them from submitting to the truth. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

*"...for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"*

***“...He is most knowing of that in which you are involved...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“...He is most knowing of that in which you are involved...”***

One should never plot to do an evil thing as it will always, one way or another, backfire on them. Even if these consequences are delayed to the next world they will face them eventually. For example, the brothers of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, desired to harm him as they desired the love, respect and affection of their father the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him. But it is clear that their scheming only put them further away from their desire. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 18:

*“And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, "Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting...”*

The more one plots evil the more Allah, the Exalted, will put them further from their goal. Even if they outwardly achieve their desire Allah, the Exalted, will cause the very thing they desired to become a curse for them in both worlds unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then do they await except the way [i.e., fate] of the former peoples?...”*

***“...Sufficient is He as Witness between me and you...”***

The divine vision of Allah, the Exalted, encompasses everything irrespective of its size or location. In addition, Allah, the Exalted, is a witness to the actions of the creation. He observes their outer physical actions and inner hidden intentions. Nothing can escape His divine vision.

A muslim should therefore strive in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in order to reach the level where they become constantly vigilant of the divine vision. This level has been referred to as excellence of faith in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. When one is fully aware of the divine vision it prevents them from sinning and encourages them to perform righteous deeds.

A muslim should be an overseer of their own soul and constantly take themselves into account in order to ensure they do not become heedless. As the main cause of sin is heedlessness. The one who takes themselves into account will find their accountability on Judgement Day easy. Whoever does not watch themselves like this will commit sins without even realising it. A muslim should also ensure they keep a watchful eye on all the people under their care and advise them accordingly as this is a responsibility given to them by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

***“...and He is the Forgiving...”***

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“...and He is...the Merciful.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Most Merciful according to His infinite status. This attribute means that Allah, the Exalted, bestows countless favours on the creation and is always extremely kind to them. This same characteristic has been attributed to others such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 128:

*“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you [i.e., your guidance] and to the believers is kind and merciful.”*

When used in reference to the creation merciful means soft-hearted and compassionate. A muslim must adopt these qualities by looking at the creation through the eye of mercy and by treating them with mercy and compassion whether they are obedient or sinful. Many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 6030, indicate that the one who does not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. So it is vital for muslims to show mercy to all through their actions such as financial and physical help and through their words such as supplicating for them. Islam in fact rewards a muslim who shows mercy to all living things such as animals. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550. In addition, the mercy they show should not be selective or occasional instead they should strive to demonstrate mercy at all times with all of creation.



***“Say, “I am not something original among the messengers...”...Say, “Have you considered: if it [the Quran] was from Allah, and you disbelieved in it while a witness from the Children of Israel has testified to something similar and believed while you were arrogant?” ...”***

The scholars from the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) living in Medina were fully aware of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they had been described in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

*“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons...”*

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

*“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons...”*

It is important to note, that all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, came with the same religion, Islam – submission to Allah, the Exalted. The only thing they differed in were smaller issues but their core and

fundamental teachings were one in the same. As the Holy Quran was in harmony with the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures there was no good reason why the people of the book should have rejected the Holy Quran and the one to whom it was given namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, it was more appropriate for them to accept Islam as the scholars of the people of the book possessed knowledge which allowed them to recognize the truth easily.

In addition, the fact that the Holy Quran confirmed the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures meant that when one rejected the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they were in essence rejecting their previous divine scriptures and their Holy Prophets, such as the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon them, also.

After all these signs verifying the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, many of the scholars of the people of the book still concealed and misinterpreted their divine teachings out of envy and fear of losing the social status and wealth they had obtained as leaders of their societies.

For example, in the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This Christian delegation did not accept Islam but agreed to a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the

delegation left Medina two brothers, Abu Haritha and Kurz Bin Alqama, were riding near each other. The mule of Abu Haritha stumbled and Kurz in frustration rebuked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indirectly. Abu Haritha in response rebuked him. When Kurz asked about his response Abu Haritha told him that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was undoubtedly the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, they had been waiting for and who had been described in their divine scriptures. When Kurz asked him why he rejected Islam even though he knew it was the truth Abu Haritha replied that he did so because of the honor, wealth and authority their people had given them and he was afraid he would lose it all if he accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 75-76.

As indicated by the main verses under discussion, some scholars from the people of the book did accept Islam, such as Abdullah Bin Salam, may Allah be pleased with him, as they were people who were on the truth before the advent of Islam and readily accepted the truth when it was presented to them.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed the importance of truthfulness and avoiding lies. The first part advises that truthfulness leads to righteousness which in turn leads to Paradise. When a person persists on truthfulness they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a truthful person.

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cherry picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Finally, the witness from the children of Israel could also be referring to the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, as one of his missions was to pave

the way for the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 6:

*“And [mention] when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, “O Children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allāh to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Aḥmad [one of the well-known names of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him].” But when he came to them with clear evidences, they said, “This is obvious magic.””*

***“Say, “...nor do I know what will be done with me or with you...””***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“Say, “...I only follow that which is revealed to me...””***

This verse indicates the importance of leading by example.

It is important for all Muslims, especially parents, to act on what they advise to others. It is obvious if one turns the pages of history that those who acted on what they preached had a much more positive effect on others compared to those who did not lead by example. The best example being the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who not only practiced what he preached but adhered to those teachings more strictly than anyone else. Only with this attitude will Muslims especially, parents have a positive impact on others. For example, if a mother warns her children not to lie as it is a sin but often lies in front of them her children are unlikely to act on her advice. A person's actions will always have more of an impact on others than their speech. It is important to note that this does not mean one needs to be perfect before advising others. It means they should sincerely strive to act on their own advice before advising others. The Holy Quran has made it clear in the following verse that Allah, the exalted, hates this behaviour. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, that the a person who commanded good but refrained from it themselves and prohibited evil yet acted on it themselves will be punished in severely Hell. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

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

So it is vital for all Muslims to strive to act on their advice themselves then advise others to do the same. Leading by example is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and is the best way to affect others in a positive way.

***“Say, “...I only follow that which is revealed to me, and I am not but a clear warner.””***

One will only benefit from the warnings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they sincerely obey and follow him and what was revealed to 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 Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

***“Say, “...and I am not but a clear warner.””***

This verse indicates the importance of implementing the teachings of Islam as reminders namely; glad tidings and warnings only benefit the person who acts on them. For example, those who ignore road hazard signs are often the ones who end up in dangerous situations. But those who act upon these hazards signs are protected from this danger. The glad tidings indicate the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon lead to the gardens of Paradise. And the warnings are the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon protects one from divine punishment such as Hell.

***“Say, “Have you considered [the consequences]: if it [the Qur’ān] was from Allāh, and you disbelieved in it...while you were arrogant...””***

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.

***“...Indeed, Allāh does not guide the wrongdoing people.”***

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.

***“...Indeed, Allāh does not guide the wrongdoing people.”***

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also

granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verse 11

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَّا سَبَقُونَا  
إِلَيْهِ وَإِذْ لَمْ يَهْتَدُوا بِهِ فَيَقُولُونَ هَذَا إِفْكٌ قَدِيمٌ



*“And those who disbelieve say of those who believe, “If it had [truly] been good, they would not have preceded us to it.” And when they are not guided by it, they will say, “This is an ancient falsehood.””*

***“And those who disbelieve say of those who believe, “If it [accepting faith] had been good, they would not have preceded us to it.”...”***

Their statement indicated their arrogance as they believed they were superior to others because of their worldly possessions.

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:

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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 those who disbelieve say of those who believe, "If it [accepting faith] had been good, they would not have preceded us to it."...”***

Their statement indicated their arrogance as they believed they were superior to others because of their worldly possessions.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or wealth. Even though, many muslims have erected these barriers such as social castes and sects thereby believing some are better than others Islam has clearly rejected this concept and declared that in this respect all people

are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

***“And those who disbelieve say of those who believe, “If it [accepting faith] had been good, they would not have preceded us to it.”...”***

Their statement indicated their arrogance as they believed they were superior to others because of their worldly possessions.

Greatness and true success is not connected to worldly things, such as wealth or fame. A person may obtain some worldly success through these things but it is quite obvious if one turns the pages of history that this type of success is very temporary and it eventually becomes a burden and regret for a person. A muslim should never believe that superiority lies in these things thereby dedicating themselves to obtaining them while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Nor should they look down at others who do not possess these worldly things believing they have no value or significance as this attitude contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6071, that the people of Paradise are those who are considered insignificant by society and concluded that if they took an oath on something Allah, the Exalted, would fulfil it for them.

True honour, success and greatness in this world and the next only lies in piety. So the more one sincerely strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the greater they are even if they appear insignificant to society. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore search for true success in this and not waste their time and efforts in searching for it in worldly things otherwise they may well reach the hereafter a great loser. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

*“Say, “Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.””*

***“And those who disbelieve say of those who believe, "If it [accepting faith] had been good, they would not have preceded us to it."...”***

It is important for muslims to understand that their worldly knowledge irrespective of how much they possess is not enough to gain success in their religious life. Even though, gaining useful worldly knowledge is praiseworthy according to the teachings of Islam as it is an excellent means for one to obtain lawful provision for themselves and their dependents yet, it is not enough to safely guide them through their religious life. For example, in most cases, worldly knowledge will not teach someone how to safely journey through a difficulty or a test in a way which pleases Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward in both worlds. The obligatory duties and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cannot be acted on by a muslim who only possesses worldly knowledge. In fact, religious knowledge has the power to guide one to success in both worlds whereas worldly knowledge will only aid someone in this world. The one who possesses religious knowledge will adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which will result in such blessings and grace that they will find success in both worlds. Whereas, worldly knowledge will inspire one to deduce their own path in religion instead of acting according to the teachings of the rightly guided namely, the righteous predecessors. Religion is not about creating one's own path it is simply to adhere to Islamic teachings.

Unfortunately, many muslims who possess worldly knowledge do not realise this important point which only reduces their chances of achieving success in both worlds. Therefore, muslims should strive to obtain and act on both religious and useful worldly knowledge if they desire success in

both worlds. This is why gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“...And when they are not guided by it [Islam], they will say, "This is an ancient falsehood.””***

The non-Muslims of Mecca spent their lives with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and full-well knew he was no liar. As they were masters of the Arabic language they full-well knew that the Holy Quran was not the words of a man. They only uttered foolish statements like these in order to put off others from accepting Islam.

For example, one of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, Walid Bin Mughira, once held a meeting with the other non-Muslim leaders of Mecca during the time of the Holy Pilgrimage. The Holy Pilgrimage did exist before the coming of Islam but the correct practices of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been completely changed. He advised the other leaders that soon many people would enter Mecca because of the Holy Pilgrimage and they will come across the message of Islam so they needed to unanimously agree on what to say about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to deter people from accepting Islam. Someone advised that they should label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a soothsayer. But Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not a soothsayer as he did not possess any of their crazy characteristics therefore people would not accept this. Another advised that they should tell people the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was crazy and was possessed by evil spirits. But Walid replied that it was obvious this was not true as these signs were not apparent in him. Finally, someone advised to label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a poet so that people would not pay attention to what he says. But again Walid replied that it was

obvious that the Holy Quran or his speech were not poetry as the Arabs were masters of poetry. Walid advised everyone to claim that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a sorcerer whose goals were to cause separation between people and their religion and divisions within families. After agreeing to this plan they dispersed and waited for people to flood into Mecca for the Holy Pilgrimage and warned them not to pay attention to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they claimed he was a sorcerer. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 362.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was reciting truthful historical accounts and beneficial lessons even though he was unlettered and had not studied the previous divine scriptures, which the non-Muslims of Mecca full well knew, was a clear sign of his Prophethood.

This was supported by the fact that they themselves testified to his sincerity and honesty. In fact, during his childhood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always under the protection of Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the evils that were widespread during the age of ignorance: the time before Islam. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached maturity he was the finest person among his people, the best of them in character and repute, the best of neighbours, the most prudent, the most honest in speech and most trustworthy. He was completely removed from immorality and other evil characteristics. Because of this he became known among the people of Mecca as Al Amin, the trustworthy. This has been

discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, The Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 180.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spent his entire life amongst the non-Muslims of Mecca was enough of a proof of his declaration of Prophethood. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, invited the non-Muslims of Mecca to embrace Islam he used his 40 years amongst them as proof that he was speaking the truth. This evidence was undeniable even by the non-Muslims. This incident is recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4553. Only the arrogance of some prevented them from submitting to the truth. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

*"...for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"*

***“...And when they are not guided by it [Islam], they will say, "This is an ancient falsehood.””***

It is important for muslims especially, in this day and age to understand the difference between those who discuss certain topics which may be considered controversial in order to genuinely benefit people through a positive change and those who simply discuss these issues in order to attract the attention of others. Those who desire a positive change in society will always show respect and good character towards others especially, to those they are challenging through their words. They never result to vulgar language or actions in order to declare their point of view. They instead study and understand the subject they are debating about without misinterpreting or falsifying information in order to support their point of view. Their criticism is always constructive and their genuine and sincere intention to improve the society is shown through their behaviour and words. These are the people who muslims should pay attention to as if they are correct it will improve society for everyone. But if their viewpoint is wrong they will accept the truth when it is made clear to them by others. But those who behave opposite to this correct attitude, whether they are found in the media or anywhere else, should simply be ignored as they do not desire to improve the lives of people. They are starved for attention and like an infant act out in order to attract some attention from others. Muslims should not circulate and pass on videos or other content which are linked to people like this as they are playing right into their hands and giving them the attention they so badly desire. Debating with these people is a complete waste of time because of their evil intention and behaviour. Muslims should instead place their efforts in other useful places which benefit them and others in both worlds.

***“...And when they are not guided by it [Islam], they will say, "This is an ancient falsehood.””***

The Holy Quran teaches mankind that certain people are so drowned in the material world no advice will penetrate their veiled hearts. The Holy Quran describes how this group of people possesses hearts harder than rocks. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

*“Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder...”*

At this point those who desire to spread the word of Islam should separate from this type of person and instead concentrate on others. But it is important to note, even in this case a muslim should always demonstrate good character towards the sinful as they can repent at anytime. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

*“...and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace.”*

Similarly, in another verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that when a limit is reached it is best to separate and leave the stubborn

and misguided people to their false beliefs. A day will undoubtedly come when Allah, the Exalted, will inform mankind who was rightly guided and who was lost in darkness. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 55:

*“And when they hear ill speech, they turn away from it and say, “For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. Peace will be upon you; we seek not the ignorant.””*

Muslims should never get depressed and confused when their good advice does not affect others. In some cases, these people are drowned in sins to such an extent their heart becomes veiled. This veil prevents the good advice affecting them in a positive way. A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, explains how a sin causes a black spot to be etched onto the spiritual heart. The more one sins the more their spiritual heart becomes engrossed by this darkness. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

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

This is similar to another verse where Allah, the Exalted, declares that their ears, eyes and hearts have been veiled from the truth and they therefore cannot be guided to the truth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 7:

*“Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil...”*

The fault does not lie with the message of Islam but in the hearts of the misguided. Just like the fault lies in the eyes of a blind person and not the bright Sun. Unfortunately, this stubborn attitude has become a widespread problem within society. Some of these people believe in Islam yet have closed their hearts and minds to the teachings of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They refuse to accept any good advice which would benefit them in both worlds.

Those who choose to spread the word of Islam should understand that there are two types of mind-sets people can adopt. The first is when someone makes their mind up beforehand about an issue and then searches and accepts only those things which support their predetermined belief. Whereas, the correct attitude is to live with an open mind by searching and accepting strong evidence regarding different issues. The first mentality will only cause problems from a personal level right up to a national level. Unfortunately, this is how some aspects of the media work. They predetermine the information they would like to publish, find bits of weak supporting evidence and then blow it out of proportion for the world to see. Those spreading the word of Islam should avoid the first type of people and instead concentrate on inviting the second group towards the truth.

Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verse 12

وَمِن قَبْلِهِ كَتَبَ مُوسَىٰ إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ  
مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّسَانًا عَرَبِيًّا يُنذِرُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَبُشْرَىٰ  
لِلْمُحْسِنِينَ



*“And before it [Quran] was the scripture of Moses to lead and as a mercy.  
And this is a confirming Book in an Arabic tongue to warn those who have  
wronged and as good tidings to the doers of good.”*

***“And before it [Quran] was the scripture of Moses to lead and as a mercy. And this is a confirming Book in an Arabic tongue...”***

Muslims must not follow in the footsteps of the children of Israel many of which failed to sincerely obey and follow the divine scripture they were granted.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this

right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“And before it [Quran] was the scripture of Moses to lead and as a mercy. And this is a confirming Book in an Arabic tongue...”***

The Holy Quran confirms the unaltered teachings of the previous divine books and corrects the altered teachings. This quality of the Holy Quran was widely recognised by the scholars from the people of the book.

The scholars from the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) living in Medina were fully aware of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they had been described in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

*“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons...”*

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

*“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons...”*

It is important to note, that all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, came with the same religion, Islam – submission to Allah, the Exalted. The only thing they differed in were smaller issues but their core and fundamental teachings were one in the same. As the Holy Quran was in harmony with the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures there was no good reason why the people of the book should have rejected the Holy Quran and the one to whom it was given namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, it was more appropriate for them to accept Islam as the scholars of the people of the book possessed knowledge which allowed them to recognize the truth easily.

In addition, the fact that the Holy Quran confirmed the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures meant that when one rejected the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they were in essence rejecting their previous divine scriptures and their Holy Prophets, such as the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon them, also.

After all these signs verifying the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, many of the scholars of the people of the book still concealed and misinterpreted their divine teachings out of envy and fear of losing the social status and wealth they had obtained as leaders of their societies.

For example, in the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This Christian delegation did not accept Islam but agreed to a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the delegation left Medina two brothers, Abu Haritha and Kurz Bin Alqama, were riding near each other. The mule of Abu Haritha stumbled and Kurz in frustration rebuked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indirectly. Abu Haritha in response rebuked him. When Kurz asked about his response Abu Haritha told him that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was undoubtedly the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, they had been waiting for and who had been described in their divine scriptures. When Kurz asked him why he rejected Islam even though he knew it was the truth Abu Haritha replied that he did so because of the honor, wealth and authority their people had given them and he was afraid he would lose it all if he accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 75-76.

It is therefore vital for Muslims to avoid the excess love for wealth and social status. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a Muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe

warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a Muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned

against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true Muslim.

If a Muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated Muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This Muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not

appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

***“...And this is a confirming Book in an Arabic tongue...”***

The non-Muslims of Mecca spent their lives with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and full-well knew he was no liar. As they were masters of the Arabic language they full-well knew that the Holy Quran was not the words of a man.

For example, one of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, Walid Bin Mughira, once held a meeting with the other non-Muslim leaders of Mecca during the time of the Holy Pilgrimage. The Holy Pilgrimage did exist before the coming of Islam but the correct practices of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been completely changed. He advised the other leaders that soon many people would enter Mecca because of the Holy Pilgrimage and they will come across the message of Islam so they needed to unanimously agree on what to say about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to deter people from accepting Islam. Someone advised that they should label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a soothsayer. But Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not a soothsayer as he did not possess any of their crazy characteristics therefore people would not accept this. Another advised that they should tell people the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was crazy and was possessed by evil spirits. But Walid replied that it was obvious this was not true as these signs were not apparent in him. Finally, someone advised to label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a poet so that people would not pay attention to what he says. But again Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Quran or his speech were not poetry as the Arabs were masters of poetry. Walid advised everyone to claim that the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a sorcerer whose goals were to cause separation between people and their religion and divisions within families. After agreeing to this plan they dispersed and waited for people to flood into Mecca for the Holy Pilgrimage and warned them not to pay attention to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they claimed he was a sorcerer. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 362.

***“...And this is a confirming Book in an Arabic tongue to warn those who have wronged and as good tidings to the doers of good.”***

This verse indicates the importance of implementing the teachings of Islam as reminders namely; glad tidings and warnings only benefit the person who acts on them. For example, those who ignore road hazard signs are often the ones who end up in dangerous situations. But those who act upon these hazards signs are protected from this danger. The glad tidings indicate the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon lead to the gardens of Paradise. And the warnings are the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon protects one from divine punishment such as Hell.

***“...And this is a confirming Book in an Arabic tongue to warn those who have wronged and as good tidings to the doers of good.”***

One will benefit from the warnings and good tidings given by the Holy Quran when they sincerely obey and follow it.

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 Quran.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

## Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verses 13-14

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ  
﴿١٤﴾

*“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.*

*Those are the companions of Paradise, abiding eternally therein as reward for what they used to do.”*

***“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course...”***

This verse is connected to chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

*“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], “Am I not your Lord?” They said, “Yes, we have testified.” [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, “Indeed, we were of this unaware.””*

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere 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.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the

will and desire of a person. If a muslim has a choice between pleasing Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments, enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person's heart indicates that it is a duty on muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a muslim. Certainty of faith allows a muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course...”***

Ignorance prevents this attitude.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course...”***

The root of this is certainty of faith.

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one’s certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“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.”***

This involves being sincere to Allah, the Exalted.

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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*“And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion.....”*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“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.”***

The right course involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

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

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

***“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.”***

The right course involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

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.

***“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.”***

The right course involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance.

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.

***“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.”***

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“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.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only

this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“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.”***

It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra’d, verse 28:

*“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”*

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the

hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

***“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.”***

Many people strive to achieve more in this material world even though they have already gained much worldly success. Even though, Islam does not prohibit this type of mentality as long as unlawful things are avoided a muslim should understand an important reality. It is obvious that peace of mind is not obtained with many worldly possessions, such as wealth. In fact, these people are often the ones who end up depressed to the point they even commit suicide. Human worldly desires have been created in such a way that no matter what one obtains they always desire more irrespective of their faith and social status. For example, Pharaoh who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, obtained every worldly blessing imaginable yet, he still did not obtain peace of mind and satisfaction. Instead his desire for more pushed him to such a stage that he desired to be worshipped like a God. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 24:

*“And said, “I am your most exalted lord.””*

No matter what desires a person fulfils it only leads them to desiring more things. A person who owns two houses wants three; the millionaire wants to become a billionaire. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6439, that the person who has one valley of gold would only desire another. A muslim who desires true peace of mind, which is more valuable than the treasures of the Earth, should therefore limit their worldly desires.

The more they limit them and only fulfil their necessities and responsibilities the more they will obtain peace of mind. This mentality closes the doors of preoccupation and striving for more worldly things which in turn gives rest to both the mind and body. If a muslim couples this with striving in the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, then they will be granted true peace of mind which extends to every aspect of their life in both worlds. But the more worldly desires they have the more their mind and body will be preoccupied with them and thus the further from true peace of mind they will be.

***“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. Those are the companions of Paradise, abiding eternally therein as reward for what they used to do.”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“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. Those are the companions of Paradise, abiding eternally therein as reward for what they used to do.”***

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom’s worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more

one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

***“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. Those are the companions of Paradise, abiding eternally therein as reward for what they used to do.”***

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 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verses 15-18

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ  
كُرْهًا وَحَمَلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ  
وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي  
أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ  
وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي ۗ إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

١٥

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ نَقَبَلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ  
سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ فِي أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَدَّ الصِّدْقِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ

١٦

وَالَّذِي قَالَ لَوْلَايَ أُفٍّ لَّكُمْ أَتَعَدَانِي أَنْ أُخْرَجَ وَقَدْ  
خَلَتِ الْقُرُونُ مِن قَبْلِي وَهُمَا يَسْتَفِغِيثَانِ اللَّهَ وَيْلَكَ ءَأَمِنَ إِنَّ  
وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقًّا فَيَقُولُ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

١٧

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِي أُمْرٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ  
قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خَسِرِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

*“And We have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment. His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship, and his gestation and weaning [period] is thirty months. [He grows] until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, “My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have repented to You, and indeed, I am of the Muslims.*

*Those are the ones from whom We will accept the best of what they did and overlook their misdeeds, [their being] among the companions of Paradise. [That is] the promise of truth which they had been promised.*

*But one who says to his parents, “Uff to you; do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [into oblivion]?” while they call to Allah for help [and to their son], “Woe to you! Believe! Indeed, the promise of Allah is truth.” But he says, “This is not but legends of the former peoples.”*

*Those are the ones upon whom the word [i.e., decree] has come into effect, [who will be] among nations which had passed on before them of jinn and men. Indeed, they [all] were losers.”*

***“And We have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment. His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship, and his gestation and weaning [period] is thirty months...But one who says to his parents, "Uff to you"...”***

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,"<sup>1</sup> 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.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful..."”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2306, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to hasten in performing righteous deeds before seven things occur.

One of the things mentioned in this Hadith which prevents righteous actions is a debilitating sickness. This is a warning to make use of one's good health before they encounter sickness. One should observe those who have lost their good health either through sickness or through ageing and therefore make use of the good health they possess by striving to gain success in lawful worldly matters as well as religious matters while giving priority to religion over the world. For example, a muslim should use their good health to journey to the Mosques regularly in order to offer their obligatory prayers with congregation before a time comes when they desire to do this but do not possess the physical strength to do so. The amazing thing about utilizing one's good health correctly is that when a muslim eventually loses it Allah, the Exalted, will continue to grant them the same reward they used to receive when doing good deeds during their time of good health. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. But those who live in heedlessness fail to utilise their good health and therefore receive no reward during their good health or when they fall ill.

This is connected to the next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion namely, senility. A muslim should make use of their youth and

strong intelligence before they reach senility. This includes gaining and acting on knowledge and using one's mental strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It is important to behave in this manner before senility occurs as even the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sought refuge from senility in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6390.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful..."”***

This is the age where a person often questions their existence after achieving much worldly success. A person who experiences this seems to feel a huge void in their life even though they may possess many things and achieved much worldly success. This often occurs as these people are not fulfilling the purpose of their creation which is to gain knowledge about Allah, the Exalted, so that they can obey and worship Him correctly. This is similar to a person who owns the latest mobile phone which has many features yet, due to a fault it fails to fulfil its primary goal which is to make phone calls. No matter how good these other features are the owner will always feel a void in respect to it as the phone does not fulfil its primary goal of existence. Similarly, a person will feel a void in their life even if they possess many worldly things. This feeling affects muslims and non-muslims. It is obvious why non-muslims feel like this as they could not be further from fulfilling the purpose of their creation so no matter what they achieve they eventually feel this void in their life. It occurs to those muslims who may even fulfil their obligatory duties but as they fail to strive to gain and act on the vital knowledge needed to fulfil their purpose correctly they experience this void. In most cases, they do not even understand the Arabic language so performing worship simply does not fill this void. One will not fill this void until they strive to fulfil the purpose of creation which is to gain knowledge on Allah, the Exalted, so that they can obey and worship Him correctly throughout every moment of their life.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents..."”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is infinitely bountiful and bestows favours and blessings without recompense or external cause. He gives generously without being asked.

The muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to 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]..."”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by bestowing the blessings they have been given to others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. The one who gives to others will be given more than they could have ever imagined. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.”*

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents...””***

As indicated by this verse, a muslim must understand that their righteous deeds, such as showing gratitude, are a blessing from Allah, the Exalted, as the inspiration, knowledge, strength and opportunity to perform them comes from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, muslims will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Understanding this fact prevents the deadly characteristic of pride. An atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. And any evil they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bares this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always

remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themselves if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches Muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles themselves before Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 215:

*“And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63, shows that humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

*“And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly...”*

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

*“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”*

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom's worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents..."”***

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.

***“And We have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment. His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my 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.

***“And We have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment. His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to...work righteousness of which You will approve..."”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2612, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who possesses complete faith is the one who is best in conduct and most kind to their family.

Unfortunately, some have adopted the bad habit of treating non-relatives in a kind manner while mistreating their own family. They behave in this manner as they do not understand the importance of treating one's own family kindly and as they fail to appreciate their family. A muslim will never achieve success until they fulfill both aspects of faith. The first is fulfilling their duties towards 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. The second is to fulfill the rights of people which includes treating them kindly. None have more right to this kind treatment than one's own family. A muslim must aid their family in all matters which are good and warn them against bad things and practices in a gentle way according to the teachings of Islam. They should not blindly support them in bad things simply because they are their relatives neither should they fail to help them in good matters because of some ill feelings towards them as this contradicts Islamic teachings. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

The best way to guide others is through a practical example as this is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is much more effective than just verbal guidance.

Finally, one should generally choose gentleness in all matters especially, when dealing with their family. Even if their commit sins they should be warned in a gentle manner and still be aided in matters which are good as this kindness is more effective in bringing them back to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, than treating them harshly.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to...to work righteousness of which You will approve..."”***

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to

the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to...to work righteousness of which You will approve..."”***

The approved deeds involve sincerely obeying and following the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions 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 Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to...to work righteousness of which You will approve..."”***

The approved deeds involve sincerely obeying and following the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to...to work righteousness of which You will approve..."”***

The approved deeds involve sincerely obeying and following the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord...make righteous for me my offspring..."”***

The root of obtaining this is leading by example.

It is important for all Muslims, especially parents, to act on what they advise to others. It is obvious if one turns the pages of history that those who acted on what they preached had a much more positive effect on others compared to those who did not lead by example. The best example being the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who not only practiced what he preached but adhered to those teachings more strictly than anyone else. Only with this attitude will Muslims especially, parents have a positive impact on others. For example, if a mother warns her children not to lie as it is a sin but often lies in front of them her children are unlikely to act on her advice. A person's actions will always have more of an impact on others than their speech. It is important to note that this does not mean one needs to be perfect before advising others. It means they should sincerely strive to act on their own advice before advising others. The Holy Quran has made it clear in the following verse that Allah, the exalted, hates this behaviour. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, that the a person who commanded good but refrained from it himself and prohibited evil yet acted on it himself will be punished in severely Hell. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

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

So it is vital for all Muslims to strive to act on their advice themselves then advise others to do the same. Leading by example is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and is the best way to affect others in a positive way.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord...make righteous for me my offspring..."”***

This involves raising one's children according to the teachings of Islam.

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.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord...Indeed, I have repented to You..."”***

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.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord...indeed, I am of the Muslims."”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord...indeed, I am of the Muslims."”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have repented to You, and indeed, I am of the Muslims." Those are the ones from whom We will accept the best of what they did and overlook their misdeeds, [their being] among the companions of Paradise...”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and

incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have repented to You, and indeed, I am of the Muslims." Those are the ones from whom We will accept the best of what they did and overlook their misdeeds, [their being] among the companions of Paradise...”***

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a muslim is in danger of dying as a non-muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

*“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”*

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have repented to You, and indeed, I am of the Muslims." Those are the ones from whom We will accept the best of what they did and overlook their misdeeds, [their being] among the companions of Paradise...”***

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling

remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have repented to You, and indeed, I am of the Muslims." Those are the ones from whom We will accept the best of what they did and overlook their misdeeds, [their being] among the companions of Paradise...”***

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6833, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever does a good deed will have a minimum of ten times reward.

Throughout Islamic teachings different amounts of reward have been declared for performing righteous deeds. Some teachings advise ten times reward like this Hadith, others seven hundred times and in some cases a reward which cannot be counted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 261:

*“The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills...”*

This varying reward is dependent on one's sincerity. The more sincere a person is the more they will be rewarded. Meaning, the more they perform

the righteous deed for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, the more they will be rewarded. For example, the one who only acts to please Allah, the Exalted, without desiring a lawful worldly blessing will obtain more reward than the one who acts in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and seeks a lawful worldly blessing.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that the more one obeys Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience the greater the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, they will receive. In each case, a muslim's minimal effort will lead to receiving a greater mercy. This mercy will ensure they are rightly guided through every situation they face so that they overcome them in order to obtain peace of mind, body and true lasting success in both worlds. But the one who holds back from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not obtain this mercy and they therefore will not obtain right guidance during their life. Instead they will encounter one difficulty after another not knowing how to respond in each case.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have repented to You, and indeed, I am of the Muslims." Those are the ones from whom We will accept the best of what they did and overlook their misdeeds, [their being] among the companions of Paradise...”***

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have repented to You, and indeed, I am of the Muslims." Those are the ones from whom We will accept the best of what they did and overlook their misdeeds, [their being] among the companions of Paradise. [That is] the promise of truth which they had been promised. But one who says to his parents, "Uff to you; do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [into oblivion]?" while they call to Allāh for help [and to their son], "Woe to you! Believe! Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth." But he says, "This is not but legends of the former peoples."”***

Ignorance prevents one from truly accepting the promises of Allah, the Exalted, so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“...until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have repented to You, and indeed, I am of the Muslims." Those are the ones from whom We will accept the best of what they did and overlook their misdeeds, [their being] among the companions of Paradise. [That is] the promise of truth which they had been promised. But one who says to his parents, "Uff to you; do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [into oblivion]?" while they call to Allāh for help [and to their son], "Woe to you! Believe! Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth." But he says, "This is not but legends of the former peoples."”***

Ignorance prevents one from truly accepting the promises of Allah, the Exalted, so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and

day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“But one who says to his parents, "Uff to you; do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [into oblivion]?"...he says, "This is not but legends of the former peoples.””***

When Allah, the Exalted, created mankind from nothing, resurrecting them from dust and bones will be easier for Him.

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His

creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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.

***“But one who says to his parents, “Uff to you; do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [into oblivion]?” while they call to Allāh for help [and to their son], “Woe to you! Believe! Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth.” But he says, “This is not but legends of the former peoples.””***

It is important to note, a muslim who believes in the Day of Judgement can still behave in this manner when they practically fail to prepare for the Day of Judgement. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“But one who says to his parents, “Uff to you; do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [into oblivion]?” while they call to Allāh for help [and to their son], “Woe to you! Believe! Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth.” But he says, “This is not but legends of the former peoples.””***

It is important to note, a muslim who believes in the Day of Judgement can still behave in this manner when they practically fail to prepare for the Day of Judgement. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“But one who says to his parents, “Uff to you; do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [into oblivion]?” while they call to Allāh for help [and to their son], “Woe to you! Believe! Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth.” But he says, “This is not but legends of the former peoples.””***

Every parent or legal guardian who raises a child will face two elements. The first is their own duty and responsibility towards the child under their care. For example, it is their responsibility to provide them with the necessities of life such as food, clothing and housing. In addition, they must arrange for both their worldly and religious education, such as teaching them the good manners discussed in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 6:

*“O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones...”*

The second element involves the child's own life choices. For example, whether they want to study hard to make something of themselves or be lazy. These choices can be between two lawful things, such as the example mentioned earlier or between right and wrong. For example, a child may have to choose between a life of crime or a lawful occupation. All children must eventually make these choices and cannot be forced to choose a particular path by someone else, such as their parent. In reality, parents

cannot constantly follow their children and somehow force them to make the right choices.

It is important for muslims to understand that they will be questioned and held accountable by Allah, the Exalted, regarding the first element, which is their duty and responsibilities given to them by Allah, the Exalted. But they will not be held accountable for the second element, which are the independent choices their children make. So a muslim should bear this in mind and concentrate fully on fulfilling their duty and not stress about the second element which is out of their control. The same way an intelligent person does not stress about the weather knowing controlling it is out of their hands they should not stress about the second element and instead concentrate on what is in their control and what they will be held accountable for.

***“But one who says to his parents, “Uff to you; do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [into oblivion]?” while they call to Allāh for help [and to their son], “Woe to you! Believe! Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth.” But he says, “This is not but legends of the former peoples.””***

It is important for muslims to understand an important point in respect to advising others. It is the duty of muslims to advise others towards good and forbid evil but a muslim should not behave as if they have been put in charge as controllers over others. This attitude only leads to anger and bitterness especially, when others do not follow their advice. It is best for muslims to discharge their duty by advising others but they should avoid stressing over the outcome of their advice meaning, whether the person acts on their advice or not. If Allah, the Exalted, advised the greatest teacher and guide of mankind namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to stress over the outcome in many places of the Holy Quran how can a muslim claim or behave as if they have been put in charge of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

*“So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”*

The muslim who behaves as a controller will not only become bitter when people fail to follow their advice but it can lead them to giving up advising others which is a duty on all muslims according to their ability.

In addition, this attitude will also cause muslims to neglect themselves and their own duties as they are too busy concerning themselves with the duties of others. Therefore, muslims should remain firm in commanding good and forbidding evil but refrain from observing and bothering about the outcome of their advice.

***“But one who says to his parents, “Uff to you; do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [into oblivion]?” while they call to Allāh for help [and to their son], “Woe to you! Believe! Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth.” But he says, “This is not but legends of the former peoples.” Those are the ones upon whom the word [i.e., decree] has come into effect, [who will be] among nations which had passed on before them of jinn and men. Indeed, they [all] were losers.”***

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one’s actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in

evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“But one who says to his parents, “Uff to you; do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [into oblivion]?” while they call to Allāh for help [and to their son], “Woe to you! Believe! Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth.” But he says, “This is not but legends of the former peoples.” Those are the ones upon whom the word [i.e., decree] has come into effect, [who will be] among nations which had passed on before them of jinn and men. Indeed, they [all] were losers.”***

The loss they suffer begins in this world.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

***“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”***

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life.

Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“But one who says to his parents, "Uff to you; do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [into oblivion]?" while they call to Allāh for help [and to their son], "Woe to you! Believe! Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth." But he says, "This is not but legends of the former peoples." Those are the ones upon whom the word [i.e., decree] has come into effect, [who will be] among nations which had passed on before them of jinn and men. Indeed, they [all] were losers.”***

The loss they suffer begins in this world.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“But one who says to his parents, “Uff to you; do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [into oblivion]?” while they call to Allāh for help [and to their son], “Woe to you! Believe! Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth.” But he says, “This is not but legends of the former peoples.” Those are the ones upon whom the word [i.e., decree] has come into effect, [who will be] among nations which had passed on before them of jinn and men. Indeed, they [all] were losers.”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person who imitates a people is counted as one of them.

All muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly warns that a muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done 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.

But those who verbally declare their love for the righteous and fail to imitate them and instead imitate the characteristics found in hypocrites and the sinful will be considered and judged as one of them. This does not mean they will lose their faith but it means they will be judged as disobedient muslims. How can a disobedient muslim be counted as an obedient muslim

and end up with the righteous? This is only wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 20:

*“Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise. The companions of Paradise - they are the attainers [of success].”*

***“But one who says to his parents, “Uff to you; do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [into oblivion]?” while they call to Allāh for help [and to their son], “Woe to you! Believe! Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth.” But he says, “This is not but legends of the former peoples.” Those are the ones upon whom the word [i.e., decree] has come into effect, [who will be] among nations which had passed on before them of jinn and men. Indeed, they [all] were losers.”***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose

their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

## Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verse 19

وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَاتٌ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوا وَيُؤْفِقُهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ



*“And for all there are degrees [of reward and punishment] for what they have done, and [it is] so that He may fully compensate them for their deeds, and they will not be wronged.”*

***“And for all there are degrees [of reward and punishment] for what they have done, and [it is] so that He may fully compensate them for their deeds, and they will not be wronged.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey 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 whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

A specific type of wishful thinking which affected the past nations and even the muslim nation is when a person believes that they can ignore the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, and somehow someone on the Day of Judgement will intercede for them and save them from Hell. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact and has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less even with his intercession some muslims whose punishment will be reduced by it will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil convinces those who do not believe in Judgement Day that even if it occurs they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on that day by claiming that they were not so bad as they avoided major crimes such as murder. They have convinced themselves that their pleas will be accepted and they will be sent to Paradise even though they disbelieved in Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. This is incredibly foolish as Allah, the Exalted, will not treat the person who believed in Him and tried to obey him like the one who disbelieved in Him. A single verse has erased this type of wishful thinking. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

*“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”*

***“And for all there are degrees [of reward and punishment] for what they have done, and [it is] so that He may fully compensate them for their deeds, and they will not be wronged.”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“And for all there are degrees [of reward and punishment] for what they have done, and [it is] so that He may fully compensate them for their deeds, and they will not be wronged.”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the

corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“And for all there are degrees [of reward and punishment] for what they have done, and [it is] so that He may fully compensate them for their deeds, and they will not be wronged.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be

thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And for all there are degrees [of reward and punishment] for what they have done, and [it is] so that He may fully compensate them for their deeds, and they will not be wronged.”***

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares that a muslim can only draw close to Him through fulfilling their obligatory duties. And they can achieve the love of Allah, the Exalted, through voluntary righteous deeds.

This description splits the servants of Allah, the Exalted, into two categories. The first group draws near to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer, and in respect to people, such as the obligatory charity. This can be summed up by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

The second category of those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, are superior to the first group as they not only fulfil their obligatory duties but strive in voluntary righteous deeds. This clearly shows that this is the only path to the proximity of Allah, the Exalted. Whoever takes a path other than this will not achieve this vital goal. This completely rejects the concept of obtaining sainthood without striving in obedience to Allah, the Exalted. The person who claims this is simply a liar. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body becomes pure. This leads to righteous deeds. So if a person does

not perform righteous deeds, such as their obligatory duties, then their body is impure which means their spiritual heart is impure as well. This person can never reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, the greatest voluntary righteous deeds one can perform are those based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anyone who chooses to perform voluntary righteous deeds not based on his traditions has been fooled by the Devil as no path will take one close to Allah, the Exalted, except the path and actions 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....”*

The pious muslims who belong in the second higher group are also those who avoid unnecessary things of this material world. This attitude aids them in focusing their efforts on performing voluntary righteous deeds. It is this group who have perfected their faith by loving, hating, giving and withholding all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“And for all there are degrees [of reward and punishment] for what they have done, and [it is] so that He may fully compensate them for their deeds, and they will not be wronged.”***

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6833, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever does a good deed will have a minimum of ten times reward.

Throughout Islamic teachings different amounts of reward have been declared for performing righteous deeds. Some teachings advise ten times reward like this Hadith, others seven hundred times and in some cases a reward which cannot be counted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 261:

*“The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills...”*

This varying reward is dependent on one's sincerity. The more sincere a person is the more they will be rewarded. Meaning, the more they perform the righteous deed for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, the more they will be rewarded. For example, the one who only acts to please Allah, the Exalted, without desiring a lawful worldly blessing will obtain more reward than the one who acts in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and seeks a lawful worldly blessing.

The main Hadith under discussion also advises that out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, will only punish according to a sin without multiplying it or He will forgive the sin. Therefore, muslims should never give up hope and strive to sincerely perform righteous deeds and sincerely repent from their sins to ensure they achieve success through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

***“And for all there are degrees [of reward and punishment] for what they have done, and [it is] so that He may fully compensate them for their deeds, and they will not be wronged.”***

This verse is connected to chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

*“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”*

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfil the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's day. A muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the

more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

***“And for all there are degrees [of reward and punishment] for what they have done, and [it is] so that He may fully compensate them for their deeds, and they will not be wronged.”***

If muslim's desire their compensation to be a positive one then they must practically prepare for their Final Judgement. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“And for all there are degrees [of reward and punishment] for what they have done, and [it is] so that He may fully compensate them for their deeds, and they will not be wronged.”***

If muslim's desire their compensation to be a positive one then they must practically prepare for their Final Judgement. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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.

***“And for all there are degrees [of reward and punishment] for what they have done, and [it is] so that He may fully compensate them for their deeds, and they will not be wronged.”***

If muslim's desire their compensation to be a positive one then they must practically prepare for their Final Judgement. This involves using the blessings one has 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 for all there are degrees [of reward and punishment] for what they have done, and [it is] so that He may fully compensate them for their deeds, and they will not be wronged.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2559, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Paradise is surrounded by hardships and Hell is surrounded by desires.

This means the path which leads to Paradise contains difficulties and hardships. In most cases, a person cannot obtain good in this world without going through some sort of difficulty, such as exerting one's energy, then how can one believe they can obtain Paradise without facing difficulties? If one turns the pages of history they will observe the righteous always faced difficulties but as they knew the path of Paradise contained difficulties they maintained their focus on the destination instead of the difficulties. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that no one had been tested more than him in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472. Therefore, muslims must realize a fact that facing some difficulties in this world is an extremely small price to pay to obtain the permanent bliss of Paradise. Therefore, they should remain patient through all difficulties while focusing on the destination.

The path to Hell is full of desires. This indicates the importance of maintaining one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, at all times by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Even though it is not unlawful to enjoy lawful pleasures in this world a muslim should minimize these as much as possible as these lawful

desires often lead to unlawful desires. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who behaves in such a manner will safe guard their faith and honor. A muslim should never obey their desires or the desires of others if it means they will disobey Allah, the Exalted, as the pleasure of fulfilling desires vanishes quickly whereas the regret and the potential punishment will last long.

To conclude, a desire fulfilled will not make one feel better if they end up in Hell. And a difficulty one faces will not make them feel bad if they end up in Paradise.

Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verse 20

وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَىٰ لَنَارٍ اَذْهَبْتُمْ طَيِّبَاتِكُمْ فِي حَيَاتِكُمُ  
الدُّنْيَا وَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهَا فَالْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ  
تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

*"And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said],  
"You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them,  
so this Day you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation  
because you were arrogant upon the earth without right and because you  
were defiantly disobedient."*

***“And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], “You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them, so this Day you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation...because you were defiantly disobedient.””***

This involves misusing the blessings one has been granted. One must avoid this outcome by using the blessings one has 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.

***“And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], “You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them, so this Day you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation...because you were defiantly disobedient.””***

This involves misusing the blessings one has been granted. One must avoid this outcome by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2886, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, criticized the slaves of wealth and fine clothing. These people are pleased when they receive these things and become displeased when they do not.

In reality, this applies to all non-essential worldly things. This criticism is not directed at those who strive in the material world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted. But it is directed at those who either pursue the unlawful in order to obtain wealth and other worldly things in order to satisfy their desires and the desires of others. And it is directed at those who pursue non-essential lawful things in such a way that it causes them to neglect obeying Allah, the Exalted, correctly. This obedience involves 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. This prevents them from preparing adequately for the hereafter and their final judgment.

In addition, this criticism is for those who are impatient when they do not obtain their unnecessary desires in this world. This attitude can cause a muslim to obey Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, they obey Him when they obtain their desires but when they do not they angrily turn away from His obedience. The Holy Quran has warned of a severe loss in both worlds for the one who adopts this attitude. 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.”*

Muslims should instead learn to be patient and content with what they possess as this is true richness according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2420. In reality, the person full of desires is needy meaning, poor even if they possess much wealth. A muslim should know Allah, the Exalted, grants people what is best for them and not according to their desires as this in most cases would lead to their destruction. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

*“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Aware and Seeing.”*

***“And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], “You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them, so this Day you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation...because you were defiantly disobedient.””***

This involves misusing the blessings one has been granted. One must avoid this outcome by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that simplicity is a part of faith.

Islam does not teach muslims to give up all their wealth and lawful desires but it instead teaches them to adopt a simple lifestyle in all aspects of their life, such as their food, clothing, housing and business, so that it provides them free time to prepare for the hereafter adequately. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This simple life includes striving in this world in order to fulfill one’s needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance.

A muslim should understand that the simpler life they lead the less they will stress over worldly things and therefore the more they will be able to strive for the hereafter thereby, obtaining peace of mind, body and soul. But the more complicated a person's life is the more they will stress, encounter difficulties and strive less for their hereafter as their preoccupations with worldly things will never seem to end. This attitude will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind, body and soul.

Simplicity leads to a life of ease in this world and a straight forward accounting on the Day of Judgment. Whereas, a complicated and indulgent life will only lead to a stressful life and a severe and difficult accounting on the Day of Judgment.

***“And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], “You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them, so this Day you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation...because you were defiantly disobedient.””***

This involves misusing the blessings one has been granted. One must avoid this outcome by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted

this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], “You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them, so this Day you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation...because you were defiantly disobedient.””***

This involves misusing the blessings one has been granted. One must avoid this outcome by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has

been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], “You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them, so this Day you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation...because you were defiantly disobedient.””***

This involves misusing the blessings one has been granted. One must avoid this outcome by using the blessings one has 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 the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], “You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them, so this Day you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation...because you were defiantly disobedient.””***

It is important for muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who*

*believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient." And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves."*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. 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 the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], “You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them, so this Day you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation because you were arrogant upon the earth without right...””***

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 the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], “You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them, so this Day you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation because you were arrogant upon the earth without right and because you were defiantly disobedient.””***

This verse also indicates that when one pursues and misuses worldly blessings it will lead to widespread corruption.

Corruption is when a person abuses the blessings they possess, especially their social influence, in order to gain worldly things, such as power and wealth. It affects a muslim’s duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and leads to much sins against people, such as oppression.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, warns that when the general public cheats each other financially Allah, the Exalted, punishes them by appointing oppressive leaders over them. One aspect of this oppression is corruption which causes the general public great distress. The same Hadith warns that when the general public break their covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then they will be overpowered by their enemies who will illegally confiscate their wealth and property from them. Again, this is an aspect of corruption where people of influence, such as government officials, freely take the belongings of others without any fear of the consequences. When the general public becomes corrupt then their leaders and other people in influential social positions are inspired to act in the same way believing this behaviour is accepted by the general public. This leads to corruption on a national level. But if the general public

obeyed Allah, the Exalted, and avoided mistreating others through corruption then their leaders and those in an influential social position would not dare act in a corrupt way full well knowing the general public would not stand for it. And according to the Hadith quoted earlier, if the general public remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, He would protect them from corrupt officials by appointing people into influential positions who are just in their affairs.

Instead of taking the immature path of blaming others for the widespread corruption observed in the world Muslims should truly reflect on their own behaviour and if necessary adjust their attitude. Otherwise, corruption in society will only increase with the passing of time. No one should believe that as they are not in an influential social position they have no effect on the corruption which occurs in society. As proven by this discussion corruption occurs because of the negative behaviour of the general public and it therefore can only be removed by the good behaviour of the general public. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

*“...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...”*

***“And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], “You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them, so this Day you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation because you were arrogant upon the earth without right and because you were defiantly disobedient.””***

This verse also indicates that when one pursues and misuses worldly blessings it will lead to widespread corruption.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never

change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In

fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true muslim.

If a muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

***“And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], “You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them, so this Day you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation because you were arrogant upon the earth without right and because you were defiantly disobedient.””***

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.

***“And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], “You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them, so this Day you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation because you were arrogant upon the earth without right and because you were defiantly disobedient.””***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verses 21-26

❁ وَأَذْكُرُ أَخَا عَادٍ إِذْ أَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهُ بِالْأَحْقَافِ وَقَدْ خَلَّتِ  
النُّذُرُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ ۖ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي  
أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٢١﴾

قَالُوا أَجِئْنَا لِنَتَأَفِكَ عَنْ ءِآلِهَتِنَا فَإِنَّا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِن كُنْتَ مِنَ  
الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

قَالَ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأُبَلِّغُكُمْ مَا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ وَلَنْ كُنِّي  
أَرْبَكُمْ قَوْمًا بَجْهَلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ عَارِضًا مُسْتَقْبِلَ أَوْدِيَّتِهِمْ قَالُوا هَذَا عَارِضٌ مُّمْطِرُنَا  
بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ بِهِ ۗ رِيحٌ فِيهَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

تُدَمِّرُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ بِأَمْرِ رَبِّهَا فَأَصْبَحُوا لَا يُرَىٰ إِلَّا مَسَكِنُهُمْ  
كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

وَلَقَدْ مَكَنَّا لَهُمْ فِي مَا إِن مَّكَّنَّاكُمْ فِيهِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا  
وَأَبْصَارًا وَأَفْئِدَةً فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَلَا أَبْصَارُهُمْ  
وَلَا أَفْئِدَتُهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِذْ كَانُوا يَجْحَدُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ  
وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

*"And mention the brother of 'Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf - and warners had already passed on before him and after him - [saying], "Do not worship except Allah. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day."*

*They said, "Have you [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him] come to delude us away from our gods? Then bring us what you promise us, if you should be of the truthful."*

*He said, "Knowledge [of its time] is only with Allah, and I convey to you that with which I was sent; but I see you [to be] a people behaving ignorantly."*

*And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys, they said, "This is a cloud bringing us rain!" Rather, it is that for which you were impatient: a wind, within it a painful punishment.*

*Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings. Thus do We recompense the criminal people.*

*And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you, and We made for them hearing and vision and hearts [i.e., intellect]. But their hearing and vision and hearts availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allah; and they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.”*

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...”***

Meaning, they knew him very well and testified to his unparalleled good character and truthfulness. This was true for all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, especially the final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

During his childhood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always under the protection of Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the evils that were widespread during the age of ignorance: the time before Islam. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached maturity he was the finest person among his people, the best of them in character and repute, the best of neighbours, the most prudent, the most honest in speech and most trustworthy. He was completely removed from immorality and other evil characteristics. Because of this he became known among the people of Mecca as Al Amin, the trustworthy. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 1, Page 180.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spent his entire life amongst the non-Muslims of Mecca was enough of a proof of his declaration of Prophethood. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, invited the non-Muslims of Mecca to embrace Islam he used his 40 years amongst them as proof that he was speaking the truth. This evidence was undeniable even by the non-Muslims. This incident is recorded in a Hadith found in *Sahih Bukhari*,

number 4553. Only the arrogance of some prevented them from submitting to the truth. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

*“...for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?”*

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf - and warners had already passed on before him and after him...”***

This verse indicates the importance of implementing the teachings of Islam as reminders namely; glad tidings and warnings only benefit the person who acts on them. For example, those who ignore road hazard signs are often the ones who end up in dangerous situations. But those who act upon these hazards signs are protected from this danger. The glad tidings indicate the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon lead to the gardens of Paradise. And the warnings are the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon protects one from divine punishment such as Hell.

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf - and warners had already passed on before him and after him...”***

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is for them to be sincerely obeyed and followed. 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 mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh...””***

True worship involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*“And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion.....”*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never

burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], "Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.””***

This indicates the great sincerity the Holy Prophet Hud, peace be upon him, possessed for 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 mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], "Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.””***

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.

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], "Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.””***

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 mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], "Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.””***

The Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation on the Day of Judgment. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864.

This will cause people to sweat according to the deeds they performed during their lives on Earth. Some people's sweat will reach up to their ankles, some their knees and for others it will reach their mouths.

One only needs to ponder over the times they were subjected to intense summer weather and how the heat affected their attitude and behaviour. Through this one can imagine how difficult the situation on Judgment Day will be when the Sun is brought so close to them. This shows that those who strive hard and exert sincere efforts in the obedience 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, will find relaxation on Judgment Day. But those who were lazy and relaxed during their lives on Earth will be subjected to great stress on Judgment Day. Simply put, the one who strives here will relax there but the one who relaxes here will strive there in difficulty.

The same way people strive hard in this material world so that they obtain a comfortable life and even a comfortable retirement, even though reaching this retirement age is not guaranteed, muslims should strive even harder in this world by obeying Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life so that they can obtain peace and comfort on a day that is guaranteed to occur. It is a sign of great ignorance to strive for a day one may never reach namely, the day of retirement, and not strive for a day they are guaranteed to reach and experience namely, Judgment Day.

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], "Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.””***

People will be commanded to cross the Bridge which will be placed over Hell on the Day of Judgment. This has been discussed extensively in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6573. It warns that extremely large hooks will be on the Bridge which will affect people according to their deeds. Some will be flung into Hell by them, some will be subjected to great torture before they cross the Bridge, others will only face minimal injury from them and finally the righteous will not be harmed by them. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 455, warns that the Bridge is narrower than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword.

The important thing to learn from this is that each person will cross the Bridge according to their deeds. So it is important for Muslims not to neglect any duties if they desire to cross the Bridge safely. They must fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. These include duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. One should not neglect this and simply hope they will magically cross the Bridge unaffected.

In addition, the ease at which a person will cross this Bridge will be a mirror of how much they remained steadfast on the straight path of Islam in this world. This straight path is the path 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...”*

Anyone who abandons this path will not successfully cross this Bridge. Simply put, the more one remains steadfast on the straight path in this world the easier they will cross the Bridge over Hell on Judgment Day. The straight path has been made clear in this world so muslims are left with no excuses from following it thereby ensuring they safely cross the Bridge on Judgment Day.

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], "Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.””***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], "Do not worship except Allāh...They said, "Have you come to delude us away from our gods?...”...He said, "...but I see you [to be] a people behaving ignorantly.””***

In reality, each idol worshipper only worships their own desires. The idols are just a physical manifestation of their desires which they worship. This is obvious as a person who worships an idol knows that the lifeless idol cannot command them to live their life a certain way so the worshiper themselves decides how they imagine their lifeless idol would like them to live. And this code of conduct is based on nothing but their own desires. This is one of the major reasons why every generation opposed the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, so viciously as they did not want to give up their desires.

So in this respect any desire which distracts one from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, becomes an idol.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], "Do not worship except Allāh...They said, "Have you come to delude us away from our gods?..."...He said, "...but I see you [to be] a people behaving ignorantly."”***

Another root cause of this behaviour is blind imitation of others. A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation.

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.

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], "Do not worship except Allāh...They said, "Have you come to delude us away from our gods?..."...He said, "...but I see you [to be] a people behaving ignorantly."”***

Another root cause of this behaviour is blind imitation of others. A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Blind imitation is even disliked within Islam.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

***“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”***

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims

who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five daily obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.” They said, “...Then bring us what you promise us, if you should be of the truthful.” He said, “Knowledge [of its time] is only with Allāh, and I convey to you that with which I was sent; but I see you [to be] a people behaving ignorantly.””***

This is a foolish attitude as the declaration of faith or sincere repentance will not be accepted from a person once they observe their end. This is why the acceptance of belief will not benefit a person when they observe the Angel of Death or on Judgement Day as the unseen has now become seen to them. In addition, just because something has not occurred then and there does not mean it will not happen later on.

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show

leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.” They said, “...Then bring us what you promise us, if you should be of the truthful.” He said, “Knowledge [of its time] is only with Allāh, and I convey to you that with which I was sent; but I see you [to be] a people behaving ignorantly.””***

These verses indicate that failing to sincerely obey and follow the knowledge given to the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, leads to divine punishment.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on

the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.” They said, “...Then bring us what you promise us, if you should be of the truthful.”...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys, they said, “This is a cloud bringing us rain!” Rather, it is that for which you were impatient: a wind, within it a painful punishment. Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings. Thus do We recompense the criminal people...and they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.” They said, “...Then bring us what you promise us, if you should be of the truthful.”...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys, they said, “This is a cloud bringing us rain!” Rather, it is that for which you were impatient: a wind, within it a painful punishment. Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings. Thus do We recompense the criminal people...and they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.” They said, “...Then bring us what you promise us, if you should be of the truthful.”...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys, they said, “This is a cloud bringing us rain!” Rather, it is that for which you were impatient: a wind, within it a painful punishment. Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings. Thus do We recompense the criminal people...and they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.” They said, “...Then bring us what you promise us, if you should be of the truthful.”...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys, they said, “This is a cloud bringing us rain!” Rather, it is that for which you were impatient: a wind, within it a painful punishment. Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings. Thus do We recompense the criminal people...and they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.”***

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.

***“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them hearing...But their hearing...availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”***

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier yet the strength of muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge namely, they believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

***“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them hearing...But their hearing...availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”***

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

Listening correctly to the word of Allah, the Exalted, is the only way one can correctly adhere to its teachings. It is important to understand the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is simply acknowledging a sound with one’s mind even if they fail to make sense of the noise. For example, a person may hear someone shouting at them from a great distance but they will not be able to understand what they are saying. Whereas, listening involves hearing a sound and understanding it so that one’s behaviour changes. For example, a person giving a specific verbal instruction to another who responds appropriately after hearing and understanding the instructions.

Muslims need to hear the word of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to understand it so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way. Unfortunately, many Muslims have failed to live up to this in respect to the Holy Quran as they are good at hearing the recitation of the Holy Quran but

fail to correctly listen to it which involves understanding and acting on its teachings.

To conclude, simply hearing the word of Allah, the Exalted, is not good enough to obtain success one must strive to instead truly listen to it.

***“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them...vision...But their...vision...availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”***

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown

to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*“...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.””*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them...vision...But their...vision...availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”***

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

It is important for muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group

greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them...vision...But their...vision...availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”***

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

It is important for a muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

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

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden message a muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

***“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them...hearts. But their...hearts availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”***

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill

the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them...hearts. But their...hearts availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”***

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

The corruption and hardness of the spiritual heart is an extremely important matter which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and, blessings be upon him, warned that when the spiritual heart becomes corrupt then the whole body becomes corrupt. This corruption is then reflected in one's speech and actions. Similarly, the Holy Quran has highlighted the importance of a soft and sound heart by advising that one will not derive benefit from their possessions or relatives on Judgment Day unless they possess a sound spiritual heart. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

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

The one with a hard spiritual heart can be described as a person who rejects the truth when it is presented to them believing they are superior in knowledge. They lack submission and the fear of Allah, the Exalted, which leads to abandoning good deeds, committing sins, excessive love and striving for the material world while remaining heedless to preparing for the eternal hereafter. The hard hearted are easily influenced by the Devil into committing sins and rejecting good deeds. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 53:

*“[That is] so He may make what Satan throws in [i.e., asserts] a trial for those within whose hearts is disease and those hard of heart...”*

Two specific blameworthy characteristics are adopted by the one who possesses a hard spiritual heart. They intentionally misinterpret divine scriptures in order to fulfil their own desires such as obtaining fame. They criticise those who strive to adhere to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they desire people to follow their thinking and love for the material world. The second is that they cherry pick verses and Hadiths which suit their desires. They label those who strive to adopt and act on all verses and Hadiths as extremists thereby making their own attitude seem pleasing to others. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 13:

*“So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened. They distort words from their [proper] places [i.e., usages] and have forgotten a portion of that of which they were reminded. And you will still observe deceit among them, except a few of them...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned that those who talk excessively without mentioning Allah, the Exalted, are prone to adopting a spiritual hard heart. The one who possesses a hard spiritual heart is furthest from Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2411.

As mentioned earlier those who abandon the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, will be cursed with a hard heart. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 13:

*“So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who laughs excessively will become hard hearted. It is important to understand this does not mean one cannot smile as this has been classified as an act of charity by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1970. Laughing excessively causes one to adopt a mentality whereby they only discuss funny issues. This causes one to avoid serious issues such as death and Judgment Day. If one avoids these important issues how can

they prepare for them? A lack of preparation will lead to one's spiritual heart becoming hard.

Some say over eating can cause hardness of the spiritual heart. This is because over eating causes one to become lazy. Laziness leads to a reduction in good deeds which can cause the spiritual heart to become hard.

As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334, when a person sins a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. If the number of sins increases then this blackness increases which leads to a hard spiritual heart. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

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

This is why it has been said persistently sinning can cause the spiritual heart to die.

It is important for muslims to strive to soften their heart as it leads to its purification. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, when the spiritual heart is purified all the limbs of the body become purified also. This purification will encourage one to perform righteous deeds and abandon sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

***“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them...hearts [intelligence]. But their...hearts availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”***

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

It is important for muslims to understand that their worldly knowledge irrespective of how much they possess is not enough to gain success in their religious life. Even though, gaining useful worldly knowledge is praiseworthy according to the teachings of Islam as it is an excellent means for one to obtain lawful provision for themselves and their dependents yet, it is not enough to safely guide them through their religious life. For example, in most cases, worldly knowledge will not teach someone how to safely journey through a difficulty or a test in a way which pleases Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward in both worlds. The obligatory duties and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cannot be acted on by a muslim who only possesses worldly knowledge. In fact, religious knowledge has the power to guide one to success in both worlds whereas worldly knowledge will only aid someone in this world. The one who possesses religious knowledge will adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which will result in such blessings and grace that they will find success in both worlds. Whereas, worldly knowledge will inspire one to deduce their own path in religion instead of

acting according to the teachings of the rightly guided namely, the righteous predecessors. Religion is not to about creating one's own path it is simply to adhere to Islamic teachings.

Unfortunately, many muslims who possess worldly knowledge do not realise this important point which only reduces their chances of achieving success in both worlds. Therefore, muslims should strive to obtain and act on both religious and useful worldly knowledge if they desire success in both worlds. This is why gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verses 27-28

وَلَقَدْ أَهَلَكْنَا مَا حَوْلَكُمْ مِّنَ الْقُرَىٰ وَصَرَّفْنَا الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ  
يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

فَلَوْلَا نَصْرُهُمُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ قُرْبَانًا ءِالِهَةً بَلْ  
ضَلُّوا عَنْهُمْ وَذَلِكِ إِفْكُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

*“And We have already destroyed what surrounds you of [those] cities, and We have diversified the signs that perhaps they might return [from disobedience].*

*Then why did those they took besides Allah as deities by which to approach [Him] not aid them? But they had strayed [departed] from them. And that was their falsehood and what they were inventing.”*

***“And We have already destroyed what surrounds you of [those] cities...”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And We have already destroyed what surrounds you of [those] cities...”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and

religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“And We have already destroyed what surrounds you of [those] cities, and We have diversified the signs that perhaps they might return [from disobedience].”***

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying],  
"Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a  
thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“And We have already destroyed what surrounds you of [those] cities,  
and We have diversified the signs that perhaps they might return  
[from disobedience].”***

It is important for a muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

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

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden

message a muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

***“...and We have diversified the signs that perhaps they might return [from disobedience].”***

Ignorance can prevent one from recognising the signs of Allah, the Exalted.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“...and We have diversified the signs that perhaps they might return [from disobedience].”***

Ignorance can prevent one from recognising the signs of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“...and We have diversified the signs that perhaps they might return [from disobedience].”***

One must sincerely obey and follow the two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain peace and success in both worlds.

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

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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 We have already destroyed what surrounds you of [those] cities...Then why did those they took besides Allāh as deities by which to approach [Him] not aid them? But they had strayed [departed] from them. And that was their falsehood and what they were inventing.”***

Some would claim that their worship of others besides Allah, the Exalted, was a means for them to please Him, such as worshipping the Angels.

The truth is that each worshipper of false gods only worships their own desires. Their deities are just a physical manifestation of their desires which they worship. This is obvious as a person who worships a deity in the form of an idol knows that the lifeless idol cannot command them to live their life a certain way so the worshiper themselves decides how they imagine their lifeless idol would like them to live. And this code of conduct is based on nothing but their own desires.

It is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“And We have already destroyed what surrounds you of [those] cities...Then why did those they took besides Allāh as deities by which to approach [Him] not aid them? But they had strayed [departed] from them. And that was their falsehood and what they were inventing.”***

Some would claim that their worship of others besides Allah, the Exalted, was a means for them to please Him, such as worshipping the Angels.

Blind imitation of one's forefathers is a major reason why people reject the truth. A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation.

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.

***“And We have already destroyed what surrounds you of [those] cities...Then why did those they took besides Allāh as deities by which to approach [Him] not aid them? But they had strayed [departed] from them. And that was their falsehood and what they were inventing.”***

Some would claim that their worship of others besides Allah, the Exalted, was a means for them to please Him, such as worshipping the Angels.

Blind imitation of one’s forefathers is a major reason why people reject the truth. A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Blind imitation is even disliked within Islam.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

*“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”*

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five daily obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.

Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verses 29-32

وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَا إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُرْآنَ فَلَمَّا  
حَضَرُوهُ قَالُوا أَنْصِتُوا فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ مُّنْذِرِينَ

٢٩

قَالُوا يَا قَوْمَنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَابًا أُنزِلَ مِن بَعْدِ مُوسَىٰ  
مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَإِلَىٰ طَرِيقِ

مُسْتَقِيمٍ ٣٠

يَقَوْمَنَا أَجِيبُوا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ وَآمِنُوا بِهِ، يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِّن  
ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ ٣١

وَمَنْ لَا يُجِبْ دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُعْجِزٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَيْسَ لَهُ  
مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءُ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ٣٢

“And [mention] when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Quran. And when

*they attended it, they said, "Listen attentively." And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.*

*They said, "O our people, indeed we have heard a [recited] Book revealed after Moses confirming what was before it which guides to the truth and to a straight path."*

*O our people, respond to the Caller of Allah and believe in him; He [i.e., Allah] will forgive for you your sins and protect you from a painful punishment.*

*But he who does not respond to the Caller of Allah will not cause failure [to Him] upon earth, and he will not have besides Him any protectors. Those are in manifest error.'"*

***“And [mention] when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Quran. And when they attended it, they said, “Listen attentively.”...”***

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier yet the strength of muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge namely, they believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

***“And [mention] when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Quran. And when they attended it, they said, “Listen attentively.”...”***

Listening correctly to the word of Allah, the Exalted, is the only way one can correctly adhere to its teachings. It is important to understand the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is simply acknowledging a sound with one’s mind even if they fail to make sense of the noise. For example, a person may hear someone shouting at them from a great distance but they will not be able to understand what they are saying. Whereas, listening involves hearing a sound and understanding it so that one’s behaviour changes. For example, a person giving a specific verbal instruction to another who responds appropriately after hearing and understanding the instructions.

Muslims need to hear the word of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to understand it so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way. Unfortunately, many Muslims have failed to live up to this in respect to the Holy Quran as they are good at hearing the recitation of the Holy Quran but fail to correctly listen to it which involves understanding and acting on its teachings.

To conclude, simply hearing the word of Allah, the Exalted, is not good enough to obtain success one must strive to instead truly listen to it.

***“And [mention] when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Quran. And when they attended it, they said, "Listen attentively." And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.”***

As indicated by the end of this verse, listening correctly to the Holy Quran will encourage one to fulfil its rights. If listening to it does not lead to this then the listener has not really listened to the Holy Quran at all.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be

upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“And [mention] when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Quran. And when they attended it, they said, “Listen attentively.” And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.”***

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 [mention] when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Quran. And when they attended it, they said, “Listen attentively.” And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.”***

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 [mention] when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Quran. And when they attended it, they said, “Listen attentively.” And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.”***

This is an aspect of being sincere 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 when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān...And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.” They said, "O our people, indeed we have heard a [recited] Book revealed after Moses confirming what was before it...”***

The scholars from the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) living in Medina were fully aware of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they had been described in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

*“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons...”*

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

*“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons...”*

It is important to note, that all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, came with the same religion, Islam – submission to Allah, the Exalted. The only thing they differed in were smaller issues but their core and fundamental teachings were one in the same. As the Holy Quran was in

harmony with the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures there was no good reason why the people of the book should have rejected the Holy Quran and the one to whom it was given namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, it was more appropriate for them to accept Islam as the scholars of the people of the book possessed knowledge which allowed them to recognize the truth easily.

In addition, the fact that the Holy Quran confirmed the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures meant that when one rejected the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they were in essence rejecting their previous divine scriptures and their Holy Prophets, such as the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon them, also.

After all these signs verifying the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, many of the scholars of the people of the book still concealed and misinterpreted their divine teachings out of envy and fear of losing the social status and wealth they had obtained as leaders of their societies.

For example, in the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This Christian delegation did not accept Islam but agreed to a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the delegation left Medina two brothers, Abu Haritha and Kurz Bin Alqama, were riding near each other. The mule of Abu Haritha stumbled and Kurz in frustration rebuked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, indirectly. Abu Haritha in response rebuked him. When Kurz asked about his response Abu Haritha told him that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was undoubtedly the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, they had been waiting for and who had been described in their divine scriptures. When Kurz asked him why he rejected Islam even though he knew it was the truth Abu Haritha replied that he did so because of the honor, wealth and authority their people had given them and he was afraid he would lose it all if he accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 75-76.

It is therefore vital for Muslims to avoid the excess love for wealth and social status. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a Muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a Muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was

allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai,

number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true Muslim.

If a Muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated Muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This Muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

Finally, the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was mentioned in the main verses under discussion instead of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, as the latter was not sent with a new law. The Bible was granted to the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, as an addition to the Torah and was not its replacement. The law of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was therefore not abrogated by the coming of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him. The Jinns were referencing the divine law and therefore mentioned the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him.

***“And when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān...And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.” They said, “O our people, indeed we have heard a [recited] Book...which guides to the truth and to a straight path. O our people, respond to the Caller of Allāh and believe in it; He [i.e., Allāh] will forgive for you your sins and protect you from a painful punishment. But he who does not respond to the Caller of Allāh will not cause failure [to Him] upon earth, and he will not have besides Him any protectors. Those are in manifest error.””***

The caller of Allah, the Exalted, could be referring to the Holy Quran. One will only gain benefit from it when they sincerely obey and follow it.

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 Quran.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

***“And when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān...And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.” They said, "O our people, indeed we have heard a [recited] Book...which guides to the truth and to a straight path. O our people, respond to the Caller of Allāh and believe in him; He [i.e., Allāh] will forgive for you your sins and protect you from a painful punishment. But he who does not respond to the Caller of Allāh will not cause failure [to Him] upon earth, and he will not have besides Him any protectors. Those are in manifest error.””***

The caller of Allah, the Exalted, could also be referring to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One will only gain peace and success in both worlds when they sincerely obey and follow 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 when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān...And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.” They said, “...O our people, respond to the Caller of Allāh and believe in him/it; He [i.e., Allāh] will forgive for you your sins...”*”**

The caller of Allah, the Exalted, could be referring to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and/or the Holy Quran. One will only gain peace and success in both worlds when they sincerely obey and follow them.

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one

who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“And when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān...And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.” They said, “...O our people, respond to the Caller of Allāh and believe in him/it; He [i.e., Allāh] will forgive for you your sins...””***

The caller of Allah, the Exalted, could be referring to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and/or the Holy Quran. One will only gain peace and success in both worlds when they sincerely obey and follow them.

The forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, mentioned in these verses can be interpreted to mean that He will forgive some of the sins of the person who responds. This is because the sins between people will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until the victim forgives their oppressor first.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the bankrupt muslim is the one who accumulates many righteous deeds, such as fasting and prayer, but as they mistreated people their good deeds will be given to their victims and if necessary their victim’s sins will be given to them on Judgement Day. This will lead to them being hurled into Hell.

It is important to understand that a muslim must fulfil two aspects of faith in order to achieve success. The first are the duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer. The second aspect is in respect to people which includes treating them kindly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true believer until they keep they physical and verbal harm away from the life and possessions of others.

It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, is infinitely forgiving meaning, He will forgive those who sincerely repent to Him. But He will not forgive the sins which involve other people until the victim forgives first. As people are not so forgiving a muslim should be fearful that those who they have wronged will exact revenge on them by taking away their precious good deeds on Judgment Day. Even if a muslim fulfils the rights of Allah, the Exalted, they may still end up in Hell simply because they have wronged others. It is therefore important for muslims to strive to fulfil both aspects of their duties in order to obtain success in both worlds.

***“And when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān...And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.” They said, “...O our people, respond to the Caller of Allāh and believe in him/it; He [Allah] will...protect you from a painful punishment.””***

The caller of Allah, the Exalted, could be referring to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and/or the Holy Quran. One will only gain peace and success in both worlds when they sincerely obey and follow them.

Allah, the Exalted, safeguards and preserves the creation and takes care of them with special care. He protects the obedient from the plots and traps of the Devil and He safeguards the disobedient from His immediate punishment in order to give them an opportunity to sincerely repent.

A muslim should act on this divine name by using the means provided to them by Allah, the Exalted, but always trust in His divine care and choices in every situation and outcome they face even if they do not observe the wisdom behind some choices. This inspires patience and even contentment with the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

*“...And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him...”*

A muslim should also understand that they will only be protected from misguidance and punishment by the Guardian namely, Allah, the Exalted. This removes any signs of pride and ensures they seek His protection through sincere obedience to Him. A muslim must act on this divine name by safeguarding every trust they possess such as their blessings by using them according to the teachings of Islam. They should safeguard their actions and speech from the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they receive more blessings from 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]...”*

***“And when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān...And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.” They said, “...O our people, respond to the Caller of Allāh and believe in him/it; He [Allah] will...protect you from a painful punishment.””***

The caller of Allah, the Exalted, could be referring to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and/or the Holy Quran. One will only gain peace and success in both worlds when they sincerely obey and follow them.

These verses teach Muslims that whenever they encounter a difficult situation they should remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance mentioned earlier, trusting that He will provide them a way out of it even if this seems impossible at the time. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

*“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”*

A Muslim should understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best for His servants even if the wisdoms behind the difficulty are not obvious. It is a person's reaction which either leads to blessings or the anger of Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to reflect on the countless examples in their own life where they believed something was bad only to change their mind later on and vice versa. This is just like when a person takes a

bitter medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. Even though the medicine is bitter they still take it believing it will benefit them. It is strange how a muslim can trust a doctor whose knowledge is limited and who is not absolutely certain the bitter medicine will benefit them and fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge is infinite and when He only decrees the best for His servants.

A muslim should understand the difference between wishful thinking and trust in Allah, the Exalted. The person who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, and then expects Him to help them in difficulties is a wishful thinker. The one who will gain the help of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated in this great event, is the one who sincerely strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience and then trusts His judgment without complaining or questioning His choice.

***“And when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān...And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.” They said, “...O our people, respond to the Caller of Allāh and believe in him/it...But he who does not respond to the Caller of Allāh will not cause failure [to Him] upon earth, and he will not have besides Him any protectors. Those are in manifest error.”*”**

The caller of Allah, the Exalted, could be referring to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and/or the Holy Quran. One will only gain peace and success in both worlds when they sincerely obey and follow them.

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the

thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“And when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān...And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.” They said, “...O our people, respond to the Caller of Allāh and believe in him/it...But he who does not respond to the Caller of Allāh will not cause failure [to Him] upon earth, and he will not have besides Him any protectors. Those are in manifest error.”*”**

The caller of Allah, the Exalted, could be referring to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and/or the Holy Quran. One will only gain peace and success in both worlds when they sincerely obey and follow them.

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and

others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān...And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.” They said, “...O our people, respond to the Caller of Allāh and believe in him/it...But he who does not respond to the Caller of Allāh will not cause failure [to Him] upon earth, and he will not have besides Him any protectors. Those are in manifest error.”*”**

The caller of Allah, the Exalted, could be referring to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and/or the Holy Quran. One will only gain peace and success in both worlds when they sincerely obey and follow them.

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“And when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān...And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.” They said, “...O our people, respond to the Caller of Allāh and believe in him/it...But he who does not respond to the Caller of Allāh will not cause failure [to Him] upon earth, and he will not have besides Him any protectors. Those are in manifest error.”*”**

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First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those

who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

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The caller of Allah, the Exalted, could be referring to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and/or the Holy Quran. One will only gain peace and success in both worlds when they sincerely obey and follow them.

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who have been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them

and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“And when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān...And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.” They said, “...O our people, respond to the Caller of Allāh and believe in him/it...But he who does not respond to the Caller of Allāh will not cause failure [to Him] upon earth, and he will not have besides Him any protectors. Those are in manifest error.”*”**

The caller of Allah, the Exalted, could be referring to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and/or the Holy Quran. One will only gain peace and success in both worlds when they sincerely obey and follow them.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them

but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“And when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān...And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.” They said, “...O our people, respond to the Caller of Allāh and believe in him/it...But he who does not respond to the Caller of Allāh will not cause failure [to Him] upon earth, and he will not have besides Him any protectors. Those are in manifest error.”*”**

The caller of Allah, the Exalted, could be referring to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and/or the Holy Quran. One will only gain peace and success in both worlds when they sincerely obey and follow them.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“And when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān...And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.” They said, “...O our people, respond to the Caller of Allāh and believe in him/it...But he who does not respond to the Caller of Allāh will not cause failure [to Him] upon earth, and he will not have besides Him any protectors. Those are in manifest error.”*”**

The caller of Allah, the Exalted, could be referring to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and/or the Holy Quran. One will only gain peace and success in both worlds when they sincerely obey and follow them. The fact that responding to them has been placed before believing in them in these verses could suggest that a muslim cannot truly believe until they sincerely obey and follow them. Finally, it is important to note, these verses do not mention disbelieving in them, they instead criticize those who fail to sincerely obey and follow them.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

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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 when We directed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān...And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.” They said, “...O our people, respond to the Caller of Allāh and believe in him/it...But he who does not respond to the Caller of Allāh will not cause failure [to Him] upon earth, and he will not have besides Him any protectors. Those are in manifest error.””***

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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.

Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verse 33

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَمْ يَعْ  
بِخَلْقِهِنَّ بِقَدِيرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَىٰ بَلَىٰ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ  
قَدِيرٌ

*“Do they not see that Allah, who created the heavens and earth and did not fail in their creation, is able to give life to the dead? Yes. Indeed, He is over all things competent.”*

***“Do they not see that Allah, who created the heavens and earth and did not fail in their creation, is able to give life to the dead? Yes...”***

The creation and constant maintenance of the Heavens and the Earth is a much greater task than resurrecting a tiny human after they turn to dust and bones. In reality, resurrecting a human from dust and bones is an easier task for Allah, the Exalted, after He created them from nothing the first time.

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face

some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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.

***“... Yes. Indeed, He is over all things competent.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who over powers all things, who in reality is the only One who possesses power and might. Anyone else who possesses strength only does so because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. There is no atom in this world or in the next that can escape the power and authority of Allah, the Exalted.

As all power belongs to Allah, the Exalted, a muslim should therefore always remember that the strength to perform righteous deeds and refrain from sins comes from Allah, the Exalted, alone. This will remove any chance of pride creeping into their heart. An atom's worth of which is enough to take a person to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Whoever desires for their faith to become mighty must obey the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be granted strong faith which will aid them to overcome all difficulties so that they leave this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. True obedience only lies in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. 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.”*

Truly Knowing Allah, the Exalted, is All Mighty should prevent a muslim from sinning. As they should know there is no way to escape the might of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, when a muslim engraves this divine name into their heart it prevents them from committing oppression and wronging others. They become fully aware that even if there is no person powerful enough to seek justice from them Allah, the Exalted, will certainly take them to account and punish them in both worlds. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, oppression to others may cause the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted, to hurl them into Hell on Judgment Day.

Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verse 34

وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَىٰ لَنَارٍ أَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ ۗ قَالُوا  
بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّنَا ۗ قَالَ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

*“And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said],  
“Is this not the truth?” They will say, “Yes, by our Lord.” He will say, “Then  
taste the punishment for what you used to deny.””*

***“And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], “Is this not the truth?” They will say, “Yes, by our Lord.”...”***

It is important for muslims to understand that whenever they face any type of worldly failure or regrets they should remind themselves of the regrets in the hereafter some people will have, such as the one mentioned in chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

*“He will say, “Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.””*

In this world one's regret will always be followed by another chance or other options which they can pursue in order to gain success once again. But the regret and failure of the hereafter is something which cannot be rectified meaning, there are no second chances in the next world. No one will have the opportunity to return to Earth in order to act differently.

Therefore, every muslim should be more concerned with the failures they may encounter in the hereafter over the failures and regrets of this world. This does not mean one should not strive to achieve lawful success in this world. It means they should always prioritise gaining success in the hereafter over gaining success in this world. This is an important mentality muslims should adopt before they reach a day where reflecting on their failures and regrets will not help them in the slightest. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], “Is this not the truth?” They will say, “Yes, by our Lord.” He will say, “Then taste the punishment for what you used to deny.””***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

Chapter 46 – Al Ahqaf, Verse 35 of 35

فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ  
كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّنْ نَّهَارٍ  
بَلَّغٌ فَبَلَّغْ فَهَلْ يَهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ



*“So be patient [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] as were those of determination among the messengers and do not be impatient for them. It will be - on the Day they see that which they are promised - as though they had not remained [in the world] except an hour of a day. [This is] notification. And will [any] be destroyed except the defiantly disobedient people?”*

***“So be patient [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] as were those of determination among the messengers...”***

This verse indicates the importance of choosing good role models.

If one turns the pages of history they will observe many people who achieved great worldly success and in some cases benefited mankind yet, they will also observe at least one thing which taints their achievements. But if one observes the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will observe nothing except success and countless things which benefit mankind. Even though, there are people who falsely criticise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is quite evident from his highly accurate and detailed biography which has been verified by reliable muslim and non-muslim historians that this criticism is based on nothing but falsehood. This is why muslims must put aside all role models and instead study and adopt the flawless character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is the only way to achieve real untainted success in both one's worldly and religious life. 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...”*

There is no goal greater than this in this world. In fact, this is what people irrespective of their faith strive to achieve. And Allah, the Exalted, has placed all of it in the footsteps of his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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.”*

It is simple, if a person desires worldly and religious success they should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they choose a path other than his whatever tainted success they achieve will eventually become a burden for them and it may lead to a punishment on a Great Day.

***“So be patient [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] as were those of determination among the messengers...”***

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.”*

***“So be patient [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] as were those of determination among the messengers...”***

In life a muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties than when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

***“So be patient [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] as were those of determination among the messengers...”***

It is important for muslims to understand that Allah, the Exalted, does not demand muslims to overcome the difficulties which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, endured. For example, they migrated from Mecca to Medina whereby they left behind their families, homes, businesses and migrated to a strange land all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

In comparison, the difficulties muslims face now are not as difficult as those the righteous predecessors faced. Muslims should therefore be grateful that they are only required to make a few small sacrifices, such as sacrificing some sleep to offer the obligatory dawn prayer and some wealth to donate the obligatory charity. Allah, the Exalted, is not commanding them to leave their homes and families for His sake. This gratitude must be shown practically by using the blessings one possesses in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, when a muslim faces difficulties they should remember the difficulties the righteous predecessors faced and how they overcame them through steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This knowledge can provide a muslim the strength to overcome their difficulties as they know the righteous predecessors were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they endured more severe difficulties with

patience. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, advises that the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, endured the most difficult of tests and they are undoubtedly the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted.

If a muslim follows the steadfast attitude of the righteous predecessors it is hoped they will end up with them in the hereafter.

***“So be patient [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...and do not be impatient for them [to accept faith]...”***

It is the duty of muslims to advise others towards good and forbid evil but a muslim should not behave as if they have been put in charge as controllers over others. This attitude only leads to anger and bitterness especially, when others do not follow their advice. It is best for muslims to discharge their duty by advising others but they should avoid stressing over the outcome of their advice meaning, whether the person acts on their advice or not. If Allah, the Exalted, advised the greatest teacher and guide of mankind namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to stress over the outcome in many places of the Holy Quran how can a muslim claim or behave as if they have been put in charge of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

*“So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”*

The muslim who behaves as a controller will not only become bitter when people fail to follow their advice but it can lead them to giving up advising others which is a duty on all muslims according to their ability.

In addition, this attitude will also cause muslims to neglect themselves and their own duties as they are too busy concerning themselves with the duties of

others. Therefore, muslims should remain firm in commanding good and forbidding evil but refrain from observing and bothering about the outcome of their advice.

***“So be patient [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...and do not be impatient for them [to accept faith]...”***

Whenever one invites others towards Islam, commands good and forbids evil they will be challenging the heedless lifestyle of many others which will inspire them to resist the truth anyway they can. The major reason all the past nations rejected their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, was due to this very reason. They could not abandon their lifestyles and characteristics and in defense of them were prepared to wage war against Allah, the Exalted, and their Holy Prophet, peace be upon him. When one takes up this important duty they must be prepared to face many hardships caused by others including their own relatives. The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, are the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they encountered countless difficulties from their nations. One only needs to study the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to observe this fact. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472, that no one in creation had been persecuted in the path of Allah, the Exalted, more than him.

In cases like this one's response to the bad attitude of others should be educated, respectful and gentle. An example of this is found in chapter 19 Maryam, verses 46-47:

*“[His father] said, "Have you no desire for my gods, O Abraham? If you do not desist, I will surely stone you, so avoid me a prolonged time.”*

*[Abraham] said, "Peace [i.e., safety] will be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Indeed, He is ever gracious to me."*

Here the kind and respectful response of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, to the harsh attitude of his elder is discussed.

In most cases, a person must possess a character flaw if they claim to get along with everyone. Due to the differences within the members of society a person will never get along with everyone. They will always be one or more that disagree with their mentality, life style and advice. This diversity will lead to tension and occasionally problems. But if a person is liked by everyone then in most cases it shows they have adopted the mentality of the hypocrites by being two-faced. If the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were not loved by all how can a normal person achieve this status? This is the reason one should not believe in propaganda as the group that were mistreated the most in this way were the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023.

For example, the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, was once falsely accused of illegal relations by a shameless woman. She was enticed into slandering him by the enemy of Allah, the Exalted, Quraon. When she accused the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, publically during a religious gathering he interrogated her. When she observed his reaction she immediately retracted her accusation and admitted the truth. As a result Allah, the Exalted, destroyed Quraon by commanding the Earth to swallow him and his great treasury. This incident has been recorded in

Imam Dhahabi's, The Major Sins, Pages 166-167. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 81:

*“And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home...”*

The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were slandered on many occasions but they remained steadfast on their mission until they were granted victory by Allah, the Exalted. When Allah, the Exalted, decides to complete a task like aiding the one who spreads the true word of faith the entire creation combined cannot stop Him.

Muslims must accept that they too will face hardships when spreading the word of Islam. Therefore, they must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, by remaining steadfast in the face of difficulties. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. If one desires to join them in the next world they must adopt this attitude also.

***“So be patient [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...and do not be impatient for them [to accept faith]...”***

The one who desires to spread the word of Islam should strive to frequently remind others of good. People can become heedless quickly therefore, reminding them consistently is important. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 51:

*“And We have [repeatedly] conveyed to them the word [i.e., the Qur’ān] that they might be reminded.”*

Just like students who revise their notes repeatedly in order to reinforce its knowledge into their minds one will benefit from being frequently reminded of the true word of Islam. One should not just offer good advice once and then give up. Repeating good words is like continuous drops of water which with time penetrates the toughest of structures. This is the tradition of Allah, the Exalted, and all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them all. For example, Allah, the Exalted, only needed to command muslims to establish the obligatory prayers once yet He has done it many times throughout the Holy Quran.

The Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, spent approximately 950 years continuously spreading the word of faith to his people. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 14:

*“And We certainly sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them a thousand years minus fifty years...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used every moment to spread the word of Islam and even in his last moments advised the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, to adhere to Islamic teachings. This has been recorded in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2697. Therefore, one should adopt this attitude and not fall prey to the whisperings of the Devil by giving up offering advice after a few occasions. The duty of a muslim who invites others to Islam is to do it consistently but whether this effects the hearts of the people is out of their control.

But it is important to stress there is a difference between being regular and hounding others. A muslim should not constantly command others to good as this can become overbearing and burdensome for others. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refrained from giving too many lectures as he did not want the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, becoming bored and overburdened. This is why the Companion, Abdullah Bin Masood, may Allah be pleased with him, only gave lectures on Thursdays even though he was requested to give more. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7127.

***“...It will be - on the Day they see that which they are promised...”***

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by the promises of Allah, the Exalted.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“...It will be - on the Day they see that which they are promised...”***

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by the promises of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“...It will be - on the Day they see that which they are promised...”***

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.

***“...It will be - on the Day they see that which they are promised...”***

The Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation on the Day of Judgment. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864.

This will cause people to sweat according to the deeds they performed during their lives on Earth. Some people's sweat will reach up to their ankles, some their knees and for others it will reach their mouths.

One only needs to ponder over the times they were subjected to intense summer weather and how the heat affected their attitude and behaviour. Through this one can imagine how difficult the situation on Judgment Day will be when the Sun is brought so close to them. This shows that those who strive hard and exert sincere efforts in the obedience 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, will find relaxation on Judgment Day. But those who were lazy and relaxed during their lives on Earth will be subjected to great stress on Judgment Day. Simply put, the one who strives here will relax there but the one who relaxes here will strive there in difficulty.

The same way people strive hard in this material world so that they obtain a comfortable life and even a comfortable retirement, even though reaching this retirement age is not guaranteed, muslims should strive even harder in this world by obeying Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of

their life so that they can obtain peace and comfort on a day that is guaranteed to occur. It is a sign of great ignorance to strive for a day one may never reach namely, the day of retirement, and not strive for a day they are guaranteed to reach and experience namely, Judgment Day.

***“...It will be - on the Day they see that which they are promised...”***

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.”*

***“...It will be - on the Day they see that which they are promised...”***

People will be commanded to cross the Bridge which will be placed over Hell on the Day of Judgment. This has been discussed extensively in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6573. It warns that extremely large hooks will be on the Bridge which will affect people according to their deeds. Some will be flung into Hell by them, some will be subjected to great torture before they cross the Bridge, others will only face minimal injury from them and finally the righteous will not be harmed by them. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 455, warns that the Bridge is narrower than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword.

The important thing to learn from this is that each person will cross the Bridge according to their deeds. So it is important for Muslims not to neglect any duties if they desire to cross the Bridge safely. They must fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. These include duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. One should not neglect this and simply hope they will magically cross the Bridge unaffected.

In addition, the ease at which a person will cross this Bridge will be a mirror of how much they remained steadfast on the straight path of Islam in this world. This straight path is the path 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...”*

Anyone who abandons this path will not successfully cross this Bridge. Simply put, the more one remains steadfast on the straight path in this world the easier they will cross the Bridge over Hell on Judgment Day. The straight path has been made clear in this world so muslims are left with no excuses from following it thereby ensuring they safely cross the Bridge on Judgment Day.

***“...It will be - on the Day they see that which they are promised - as though they had not remained [in the world] except an hour of a day. [This is] notification...”***

This verse encourages one to avoid delaying preparing for the Day of Judgement.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were

younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

*“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.” But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”*

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

***“...It will be - on the Day they see that which they are promised - as though they had not remained [in the world] except an hour of a day. [This is] notification...”***

This verse encourages one to avoid delaying preparing for the Day of Judgement.

It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of the material world. Unfortunately, muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared.

It is important for muslims to understand that no matter how long they live life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A muslim only fails preparing for the hereafter correctly because of their pursuit of the excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities.

A muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“...It will be - on the Day they see that which they are promised - as though they had not remained [in the world] except an hour of a day. [This is] notification...”***

This verse encourages one to avoid delaying preparing for the Day of Judgement.

When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing. Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim they stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that they stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, muslims do not treat it like one. Instead, they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying

their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.

***“...It will be - on the Day they see that which they are promised - as though they had not remained [in the world] except an hour of a day. [This is] notification...”***

This verse encourages one to avoid delaying preparing for the Day of Judgement.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that there are two blessings people often do not appreciate until they lose them namely, good health and free time.

Everything in this material can be bought, even through illegal means, except time. Once it passes it does not return. Even though this reality is not denied by anyone irrespective of their faith yet, many muslims do not appreciate and make good use of the time they have been given. Many have adopted the mentality that they will prepare for the hereafter tomorrow. But as each day passes this tomorrow keeps getting delayed until, in many cases, this tomorrow never comes. And they only realise this tomorrow when it is too late meaning, at the time of their death. Those who are fortunate enough to reach this tomorrow during their lives may inhabit the Mosques when they reach elderly age but as they have dedicated so much time and energy to the material world their bodies might be in Mosques yet, their hearts and tongues are still engrossed in the material world. This is obvious to those who regularly attend Mosques. These muslims are unlikely to learn and act on Islamic teachings because of their elderly age and their worldly mentalities.

In addition, with the passing of time, in most cases, one's responsibilities only increase such as marriage and raising children. So delaying preparing for the hereafter until one is supposedly more free is simply foolish. Islam does not teach muslims to abandon the world but it does encourage them to make correct use of their time by taking enough from the material world in order to fulfil their necessitates and responsibilities without extravagance or waste and then dedicate the rest of their efforts to preparing for the permanent hereafter. This is how one uses their time correctly. How many muslims can honestly say they dedicate the majority of their efforts to preparing for the hereafter over beautifying their temporal world?

***“...[This is] notification. And will [any] be destroyed except the defiantly disobedient people?”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“...[This is] notification. And will [any] be destroyed except the defiantly disobedient people?”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“...[This is] notification. And will [any] be destroyed except the defiantly disobedient people?”***

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.

***“...[This is] notification. And will [any] be destroyed except the defiantly disobedient people?”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and

religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

# بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verses 1-3

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَضَلَّ أَعْمَلَهُمْ ﴿١﴾

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَءَامَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ  
وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَأَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ ﴿٢﴾

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا اتَّبَعُوا الْبَاطِلَ وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّبَعُوا  
الْحَقَّ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ أَمْثَلَهُمْ ﴿٣﴾

*“Those who disbelieve and avert [people] from the way of Allah - He will waste their deeds.*

*And those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what has been sent down upon Muhammad [peace and blessings be upon him] - and it is the truth from their Lord - He will remove from them their misdeeds and amend their condition.*

*That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood, and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord. Thus does Allah present to the people their comparisons.”*

***“Those who disbelieve and avert [people] from the way of Allah - He will waste their deeds...That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood...”***

These verses warn against choosing the wrong role model.

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the

sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“Those who disbelieve and avert [people] from the way of Allah - He will waste their deeds...That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood...”***

These verses warn against bad companionship.

Muslims should note that a major sign of true love is when one directs their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is because obedience leads to success and safety in both this world and in the hereafter. A person who does not desire safety and success for a person can never truly love them irrespective of what they claim or how they treat the other person. The same way a person becomes happy when their beloved obtains worldly success, like a job, they will also desire their beloved to obtain success in the hereafter. If a person does not care about another obtaining safety and success especially, in the next world then they do not love them.

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

Therefore, a muslim should assess whether those in their life direct them towards Allah, the Exalted, or not. If they do then it is a clear sign of their love for them. If they do not then it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

***“Those who disbelieve and avert [people] from the way of Allah - He will waste their deeds...That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood...”***

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking

for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“Those who...avert [people] from the way of Allah - He will waste their deeds...That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood...”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who guides others to something good will receive the same reward as those who act on their advice. And those who guide others to sins will be held accountable as if they committed the sins.

It is important for muslims to be careful when advising and guiding others. A muslim should only advise others in matters of good so that they gain reward from it and avoid advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. A person will not escape punishment on Judgment Day by simply claiming they are only inviting others towards sins even if they did not commit the sins themselves. Allah, the Exalted, will hold both the guide and the follower accountable for their actions. Muslims should therefore only advise others to do the things they would do themselves. If they dislike an action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

Because of this Islamic principle muslims should ensure they gain the adequate knowledge before advising others as they can easily multiply their own sins if they incorrectly advise others.

In addition, this principle is an extremely easy way for muslims to gain reward for actions they cannot perform themselves due to a lack of

means, such as wealth. For example, a person who is not financially able to donate charity can encourage others to do so and this will result in them gaining the same reward as the one who gave charity.

***“And those who believe and do righteous deeds...and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“And those who believe and do righteous deeds...and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in

Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“And those who believe and do righteous deeds...and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord...”***

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by

not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“And those who believe and do righteous deeds...and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord...”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Therefore, muslims must actualize their belief in the Day of Judgement by practically preparing for it. This involves 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.

***“And those who...believe in what has been sent down upon Muhammad - and it is the truth from their Lord...and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord...”***

True belief involves showing sincerity.

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

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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 Muhammad], "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 those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what has been sent down upon Muḥammad - and it is the truth from their Lord - He will remove from them their misdeeds...and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord...”***

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“And those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what has been sent down upon Muḥammad - and it is the truth from their Lord - He will remove from them their misdeeds and amend their condition...and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1081, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims how to gain blessings in their provision, divine support and an improvement in their condition and state.

The first thing is to sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted, before one dies. As the time of death is unknown this Hadith actually indicates sincerely repenting whenever one commits a sin meaning, repenting without delay. This consists of seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and whoever else has been wronged, feeling regret, making a firm promise not to commit the same or a similar sin again. And finally, if possible, to make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

The next thing advised in the main Hadith is that a muslim must make use of their time before they become preoccupied with responsibilities, an illness or a difficulty. A muslim can achieve this by obeying Allah, the Exalted, through fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must hasten to perform righteous deeds within their means as much as possible without delay as the tomorrow they hope for may never come. It is hoped that the one who behaves in this manner will be supported by Allah, the Exalted,

when they are no longer in a position to perform extra righteous deeds due to a change in circumstances.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a muslim must strengthen their bond with Allah, the Exalted, by remembering Him much. True remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, consists of three levels. The first is internal remembrance meaning, sincerity to Him. The second level consists of remembering Allah, the Exalted, by speaking good words and avoiding vain and sinful speech. And the highest level is to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, through one's actions as outlined earlier.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith is giving much charity both hidden and open. This includes both the obligatory and voluntary charity. It is important to note, this means giving charity according to one's means whether it is much or little. Allah, the Exalted, does not observe quantity He observes and judges actions based on quality meaning, one's sincerity. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. This leaves muslims with no excuses but to give charity according to their means. In addition, it is important to give charity regularly instead of once in a while as regular deeds are more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, even if they are little. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465. Finally, those who desire to encourage others to give charity can give it publically. This will lead to them gaining the same reward as those who donate because of their inspiration. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. But those who are fearful of showing off, which cancels their reward, should do so privately. Islam has provided many options and opportunities for muslims to gain much reward which lead to the removal of their burdens in both worlds.

***“And those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what has been sent down upon Muḥammad - and it is the truth from their Lord - He will remove from them their misdeeds and amend their condition...and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord...”***

These verses are connected to chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

*“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”*

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfil the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's day. A muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the

more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

***“And those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what has been sent down upon Muḥammad - and it is the truth from their Lord - He will remove from them their misdeeds and amend their condition...and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord...”***

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“And those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what has been sent down upon Muḥammad - and it is the truth from their Lord - He will remove from them their misdeeds and amend their condition...and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord...”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally,

this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“And those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what has been sent down upon Muḥammad - and it is the truth from their Lord - He will remove from them their misdeeds and amend their condition...and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord...”***

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who have been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears

the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“And those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what has been sent down upon Muḥammad - and it is the truth from their Lord - He will remove from them their misdeeds and amend their condition...and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord...”***

It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

*“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”*

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found

in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

***“Those who disbelieve and avert [people] from the way of Allāh - He will waste their deeds. And those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what has been sent down upon Muḥammad - and it is the truth from their Lord - He will remove from them their misdeeds and amend their condition. That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood, and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord. Thus does Allāh present to the people their comparisons.”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person who imitates a people is counted as one of them.

All muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly warns that a muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done 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.

But those who verbally declare their love for the righteous and fail to imitate them and instead imitate the characteristics found in hypocrites and the sinful will be considered and judged as one of them. This does not mean they will lose their faith but it means they will be judged as disobedient muslims. How can a disobedient muslim be counted as an obedient muslim

and end up with the righteous? This is only wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 20:

*“Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise. The companions of Paradise - they are the attainers [of success].”*

***“Those who disbelieve and avert [people] from the way of Allāh - He will waste their deeds. And those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what has been sent down upon Muḥammad - and it is the truth from their Lord - He will remove from them their misdeeds and amend their condition. That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood, and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord. Thus does Allāh present to the people their comparisons.”***

Every muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they barely know him as they are too busy to study his life, character and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and

supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

***“Those who disbelieve and avert [people] from the way of Allāh - He will waste their deeds. And those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what has been sent down upon Muḥammad - and it is the truth from their Lord - He will remove from them their misdeeds and amend their condition. That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood, and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord. Thus does Allāh present to the people their comparisons.”***

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.

***“Those who disbelieve and avert [people] from the way of Allāh - He will waste their deeds. And those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what has been sent down upon Muḥammad - and it is the truth from their Lord - He will remove from them their misdeeds and amend their condition. That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood, and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord. Thus does Allāh present to the people their comparisons.”***

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.

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verses 4-6

فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمْ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَثْخَمْتُمُوهُمْ فَشُدُّوا  
الْوَتَاقَ فِيمَا مَنَّا بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا ذَلِكَ  
وَلَوْ بِشَاءِ اللَّهِ لَأَنْصَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَلَكِن لِّبَلَاؤِ بَعْضِكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ  
وَالَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَنْ يُضِلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٤﴾

سَيَهْدِيهِمْ وَيُصْلِحُ بَالَهُمْ ﴿٥﴾

وَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ عَرَّفَهَا لَهُمْ ﴿٦﴾

*“So when you meet those who disbelieve [in battle], strike [their] necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure [their] bonds, and either [confer] favor afterwards or ransom [them] until the war lays down its burdens. That [is the command]. And if Allah had willed, He could have taken vengeance upon them [Himself], but [He ordered armed struggle] to test some of you by means of others. And those who are killed in the cause of Allah - never will He waste their deeds.*

*He will guide them and amend their condition.*

*And admit them to Paradise, which He has made known to them.”*

***“So when you meet those who disbelieve [in battle], strike [their] necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure [their] bonds, and either [confer] favor afterwards or ransom [them] until the war lays down its burdens...”***

It is vital to understand that in order to correctly understand the meanings of the verses of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, one must place them in their correct context. Meaning, no verse or Hadith can be taken in isolation without observing the context in which it was revealed in order to justify someone's actions. In order to correctly understand the context one must assess the verses and Hadiths which are linked to it in the light of the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Only in this way will it become clear what or who a specific verse or Hadith refers to.

In addition, Muslims can only take up arms against external aggressors under the banner of a legitimate ruler and when it is done according to the injunctions found within the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who fight must constantly fear Allah, the Exalted, in crossing these limits and rules. One such rule is to resort to war only when one is attacked, as indicated by the main verses under discussion. Therefore, showing physical aggression against an enemy in a state of peace is forbidden. Another rule is that when the enemy desists from aggression then Muslims must desist also. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 193:

*“...But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression [i.e., assault] except against the violators.”*

If the enemy desires peace it must be granted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 90:

*“...So if they remove themselves from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allāh has not made for you a cause [for fighting] against them.”*

The third rule is that civilians are not to be harmed. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, repeatedly forbade women, children, elders, and the sick, as well as monks and hermits to be harmed during war. This has been confirmed in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2614, and Musnad Ahmad, number 2728.

The first Caliph of Islam Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased him, forbade the killing of children, women and the elderly. He forbade the cutting of fruit bearing trees, damaging property and the killing of cattle. This has been advised in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba, number 33121.

The second Caliph of Islam Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, made it clear to the Muslim armies not to harm non-soldiers such as a farmer. This has been advised in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba, number 33120.

In case of impending conflict the Muslim nation are commanded to prepare as best as they can. This preparation aims to deter the enemy from attacking, in which case if the enemy wish for peace it must be granted to them. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verses 60-61:

*“And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allāh and your enemy...And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also]...”*

Permission is granted to fight those who do not honor their treaties with the Muslims. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 12-13:

*“And if they break their oaths after their treaty and defame your religion, then combat the leaders of disbelief, for indeed, there are no oaths [sacred] to them; [fight them that] they might cease. Would you not fight against a people who broke their oaths and determined to expel the Messenger, and they had begun [the attack upon] you the first time?”*

Islam has forbade attacking those who respect their treaties. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 7:

*“...So as long as they are upright toward you, be upright toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him].”*

There is no question of forcing anyone to accept Islam as it is something which must be accepted by one’s heart not only through one’s tongue and actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

*“There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion...”*

Those who are at peace with the Muslims are to be treated with justice at all times. Chapter 60 Al Mumtahanah, verses 8-9:

*“Allāh does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly. Allāh only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion...”*

War is hateful to Allah, the Exalted, and Muslims must be forced into it and not desire it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

*“Battle has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even warned Muslims not to desire fighting and instead commanded them to desire safety from Allah, the Exalted. But if they were forced to encounter the enemy then they must remain steadfast. This has been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2966.

The real intent of these verses is to stress that force should be used only when its use is unavoidable, only to the extent that is absolutely necessary and under the guidance of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

As mentioned earlier it is vital to assess a verse or a Hadith in its right context in order to understand who, what and where it applies. Unfortunately, many people, intentionally or unintentionally, fail to interpret the verses and Hadiths on fighting in this way. One very famous example is

of a verse which is referred to as the sword verse even though the word “sword” is not mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 5:

*“And when the inviolable months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush...”*

As explained earlier in detail even this statement of war is restricted to specific conditions and concessions of peace. In addition, studying the historical context of this and other related verses clearly prove that it is not a universal principle for fighting non-Muslims. Meaning, the verse refers to a specific group of people, at a specific time and in a specific place.

The surrounding verses of the Sword verse clearly indicate, multiple times, that the polytheists referred to are only those who repeatedly violated their peace treaties with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and engaged in acts of violent aggression against the Muslim community and its allies. For example, the verse immediately before the Sword verse, meaning, chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 4, states:

*“Excepted are those with whom you made a treaty among the polytheists and then they have not been deficient toward you in anything or supported anyone against you; so complete for them their treaty until their term [has ended]. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him].”*

This is followed by another command in a related verse, chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 7:

*“How can there be for the polytheists a treaty in the sight of Allāh and with His Messenger, except for those with whom you made a treaty at al-Masjid al-Ḥarām? So as long as they are upright toward you, be upright toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him].”*

The crimes of these polytheists whom fighting was commanded against are mentioned in other related verses. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 8-10:

*“How [can there be a treaty] while, if they gain dominance over you, they do not observe concerning you any pact of kinship or covenant of protection? They satisfy you with their mouths, but their hearts refuse [compliance], and most of them are defiantly disobedient. They have exchanged the signs of Allāh for a small price and averted [people] from His way. Indeed, it was evil that they were doing. They do not observe toward a believer any pact of kinship or covenant of protection. And it is they who are the transgressors.”*

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 12-13:

*“And if they break their oaths after their treaty and defame your religion, then combat the leaders of disbelief, for indeed, there are no oaths [sacred] to them; [fight them that] they might cease. Would you not fight against a people who broke their oaths and determined to expel the Messenger, and they had begun [the attack upon] you the first time?...”*

These specific polytheists continuously broke their agreements and aided others against Islam. They began hostilities against the Muslims, prevented people from accepting Islam, expelled Muslims from Mecca and Masjid Al Haram. At least eight times in the quoted verses their crimes against the Muslims are mentioned.

In chapter 9 Tawbah, verse 12, which is quoted above, the goal of fighting the “leaders of disbelief” is so they “cease” from their acts of aggression. These verses, like the rest, indicate the importance of adhering to specific conditions during times of war such as fighting only those who fight them first.

In addition, these polytheists were still offered many warnings and concessions. They were given a four-month period of respite and peace. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 2:

*“So travel freely, [O disbelievers], throughout the land [during] four months but know that you cannot cause failure to Allah...”*

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 5:

*“And when the inviolable [four] months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush...”*

This respite was given so that they either accept Islam or peacefully leave the Arabian Peninsula. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to grant protection to any of these polytheists who request it so that they have the opportunity to listen to the teachings of Islam without any fear or pressure or they could peacefully leave the Arabian Peninsula without the fear of being harmed. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 6:

*“And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allāh [i.e., the Qur’ān]. Then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know.”*

The command in the sword verse of fighting and killing these polytheists would only come into effect if they remained in the Arabian Peninsula after the four-month respite without accepting Islam. It is important to note that many of the polytheists took advantage of this respite and accepted Islam. Because of this respite fighting came to an end and no blood was actually shed on account of the Sword verse as the aim of this verse was to act as a deterrent from further bloodshed meaning, either these polytheists accept Islam or leave the Arabian Peninsula peacefully.

To conclude, the surrounding verses and the blessed life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, place the Sword verse in its correct context. Meaning, these verses were specifically revealed in order to put an end to attacks from specific hostile polytheists against the Muslim community. Therefore, they cannot be blankly applied to others after them.

***“So when you meet those who disbelieve [in battle], strike [their] necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure [their] bonds, and either [confer] favor afterwards or ransom [them] until the war lays down its burdens...”***

There are many examples when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, demonstrated great kindness to prisoners of war. For example, in the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After Allah, the Exalted, granted victory to the Muslims the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, headed back to Medina. One of the prisoners of Badr claimed he was very poor and did not have enough wealth to ransom himself. He appealed to the soft nature of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and asked him to set him free. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, showed mercy to him and fulfilled his request on the condition that he would not fight against Islam again. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 326-327.

Throughout the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Muslims have been advised to be merciful to others. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, advises that those who show mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, that showing mercy is not only through one's actions, such as donating wealth to the poor. It in fact encompasses every aspect of one's life and interaction with others, such as one's words. This is why Allah, the Exalted, warns those who show mercy to others by donating charity that failing to show mercy through their speech, such as counting their favours done to others, only cancels their reward. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

*“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury...”*

True mercy is shown in everything: one's facial expression, one's glance and the tone of their speech. This was the full mercy shown by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is therefore how Muslims must act.

In addition, showing mercy is so important that Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear in the Holy Quran that even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possessed countless beautiful and noble characteristics yet, the one which attracted the hearts of people towards him and Islam was mercy. Chapter 3 Alee 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...”*

It clearly warns that without mercy people would have fled from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If this was the case in respect to him even though he possessed countless other beautiful characteristics how can Muslims, who do not possess such noble characteristics, expect to have a positive impact on others, such as their children, without showing true mercy?

Simply put, Muslims should treat others how they wish to be treated by Allah, the Exalted, and others, which is undoubtedly with true and full mercy.

***“...That [is the command]. And if Allāh had willed, He could have taken vengeance upon them [Himself]...”***

Allah, the Exalted, takes revenge on those who oppress His weak servants as they do not possess the power to defend nor avenge themselves.

A muslim who understands this divine name will not oppress the servants of Allah, the Exalted, especially those who appear defenceless as in reality their Protector and Avenger is Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, will take revenge for His servants during their lives on Earth and especially on Judgement Day. He will establish justice by forcing the oppressor to hand over their righteous deeds to their victim and if necessary, the victim's sins will be shifted to their oppressor. This may well cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

A muslim must act on this divine name by taking revenge against their own inner Devil which inspires them towards evil by subjecting it to the strict obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. And a muslim must seek revenge on all things which prevent them from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by turning away from them.

***“...That [is the command]. And if Allāh had willed, He could have taken vengeance upon them [Himself], but [He ordered armed struggle] to test some of you by means of others...”***

This was a great mercy from Allah, the Exalted, as His tradition when a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, is persistently and violently rejected by his nation is to destroy the nation completely. Allah, the Exalted, withheld this total punishment and instead punished a few people through armed struggle.

In addition, in life a muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties than when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while

acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

***“...That [is the command]. And if Allāh had willed, He could have taken vengeance upon them [Himself], but [He ordered armed struggle] to test some of you by means of others...”***

Generally speaking, this verse reminds muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant muslim will have no weapon to defend himself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“...That [is the command]. And if Allāh had willed, He could have taken vengeance upon them [Himself], but [He ordered armed struggle] to test some of you by means of others...”***

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 those who are killed in the cause of Allāh - never will He waste their deeds. He will guide them [in the hereafter] and amend their condition.”***

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“...And those who are killed in the cause of Allāh - never will He waste their deeds. He will guide them [in the hereafter] and amend their condition.”***

One of the reasons why martyrs are blessed with such a high rank is due to their sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they sincerely sacrifice everything for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“...And those who are killed in the cause of Allāh - never will He waste their deeds. He will guide them [in the hereafter] and amend their condition. And admit them to Paradise, which He has made known to them.”***

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more

one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verse 7

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن نَّصُرُوا اللَّهَ بَنَصْرِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ



*“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”*

***“O you who have believed...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

## ***“O you who have believed...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai,

number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“O you who have believed, if you support Allāh, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”***

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfil the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's day. A muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

***“O you who have believed, if you support Allāh, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”***

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds He blesses their five senses so that they use them in obedience to Him. This righteous servant will very rarely commit sins. This increase in guidance has been indicated in Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

This muslim reaches the level of excellence which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when a muslim performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will guard their mind and body from sins. This is the one who when they speak they speak for Allah, the Exalted, when they are silent they are silent for Allah, the Exalted. When they act they act for Him and when they are still they are for His sake. This is an aspect of monotheism and understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this muslim’s supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge

and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.

***“O you who have believed, if you support Allāh, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”***

This verse reminds muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant muslim will have no weapon to defend himself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“O you who have believed, if you support Allāh, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verses 8-11

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَتَعَسَا لَهُمْ وَأَضَلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٨﴾

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَرِهُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٩﴾

﴿٩﴾ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ دَمَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ أَمْثَلُهَا ﴿١٠﴾

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَأَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ لَا مَوْلَى لَهُمْ ﴿١١﴾

*“But those who disbelieve - for them is misery, and He will waste their deeds.*

*That is because they disliked what Allah revealed, so He rendered worthless their deeds.*

*Have they not traveled through the land and seen how was the end of those before them? Allah destroyed [everything] over them, and for the disbelievers is something comparable.*

*That is because Allah is the protector of those who have believed and because the disbelievers have no protector.”*

***“But those who disbelieve - for them is misery, and He will waste their deeds. That is because they disliked what Allah revealed, so He rendered worthless their deeds...and because the disbelievers have no protector.”***

This outcome occurs when one fails to sincerely follow and obey the two sources of guidance revealed by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions 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 Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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 Muhammad], "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.

***“But those who disbelieve - for them is misery, and He will waste their deeds. That is because they disliked what Allah revealed, so He rendered worthless their deeds...and because the disbelievers have no protector.”***

This outcome occurs when one fails to sincerely follow and obey the two sources of guidance revealed by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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.

***“But those who disbelieve - for them is misery, and He will waste their deeds. That is because they disliked what Allah revealed, so He rendered worthless their deeds...and because the disbelievers have no protector.”***

This outcome occurs when one fails to sincerely follow and obey the two sources of guidance revealed by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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.

***“But those who disbelieve - for them is misery, and He will waste their deeds. That is because they disliked what Allah revealed, so He rendered worthless their deeds...and because the disbelievers have no protector.”***

This outcome occurs when one fails to sincerely follow and obey the two sources of guidance revealed by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if

they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and affect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“But those who disbelieve - for them is misery, and He will waste their deeds. That is because they disliked what Allah revealed, so He rendered worthless their deeds...and because the disbelievers have no protector.”***

This outcome occurs when one fails to sincerely follow and obey the two sources of guidance revealed by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“But those who disbelieve - for them is misery, and He will waste their deeds. That is because they disliked what Allah revealed, so He rendered worthless their deeds...and because the disbelievers have no protector.”***

This outcome occurs when one fails to sincerely follow and obey the two sources of guidance revealed by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

*“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”*

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

***“But those who disbelieve - for them is misery, and He will waste their deeds. That is because they disliked what Allah revealed, so He rendered worthless their deeds...and because the disbelievers have no protector.”***

This outcome occurs when one fails to sincerely follow and obey the two sources of guidance revealed by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves

to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“But those who disbelieve - for them is misery, and He will waste their deeds. That is because they disliked what Allah revealed, so He rendered worthless their deeds...and because the disbelievers have no protector.”***

This outcome occurs when one fails to sincerely follow and obey the two sources of guidance revealed by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were

granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“Have they not traveled through the land and seen how was the end of those before them? Allah destroyed [everything] over them, and for the disbelievers is something comparable.”***

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“Have they not traveled through the land and seen how was the end of those before them? Allah destroyed [everything] over them, and for the disbelievers is something comparable.”***

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

***“Have they not traveled through the land and seen how was the end of those before them? Allah destroyed [everything] over them, and for the disbelievers is something comparable.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be

thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“Have they not traveled through the land and seen how was the end of those before them? Allah destroyed [everything] over them, and for the disbelievers is something comparable.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“That is because Allāh is the protector of those who have believed and because the disbelievers have no protector.”***

Allah, the Exalted, safeguards and preserves the creation and takes care of them with special care. He protects the obedient from the plots and traps of the Devil and He safeguards the disobedient from His immediate punishment in order to give them an opportunity to sincerely repent.

A muslim should act on this divine name by using the means provided to them by Allah, the Exalted, but always trust in His divine care and choices in every situation and outcome they face even if they do not observe the wisdom behind some choices. This inspires patience and even contentment with the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

*“...And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him...”*

A muslim should also understand that they will only be protected from misguidance and punishment by the Guardian namely, Allah, the Exalted. This removes any signs of pride and ensures they seek His protection through sincere obedience to Him. A muslim must act on this divine name by safeguarding every trust they possess such as their blessings by using them according to the teachings of Islam. They should safeguard their actions and speech from the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This will

ensure they receive more blessings from 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]...”*

***“That is because Allāh is the protector of those who have believed and because the disbelievers have no protector.”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*“And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion.....”*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never

burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“That is because Allāh is the protector of those who have believed and because the disbelievers have no protector.”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verse 12

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي  
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَتَمَنَّوْنَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ  
الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ



*“Indeed, Allah will admit those who have believed and done righteous deeds to gardens beneath which rivers flow, but those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as grazing livestock eat, and the Fire will be a residence for them.”*

***“Indeed, Allah will admit those who have believed and done righteous deeds to gardens...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

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*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“Indeed, Allah will admit those who have believed and done righteous deeds to gardens...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“Indeed, Allah will admit those who have believed and done righteous deeds to gardens...”***

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified

sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“Indeed, Allāh will admit those who have believed and done righteous deeds to gardens beneath which rivers flow...”***

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

***“...but those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as grazing livestock eat...”***

This refers to greedily fulfilling one's desires without restriction or self-control.

It is important to note, the material world which one should detach from actually refers to one's desires. It does not refer to the physical world, such as the mountains. This is indicated by chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 14:

*“Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return [i.e., Paradise].”*

These things are connected to the desires of people and by them one becomes distracted from preparing for the hereafter. When one abstains from their desires they are in fact detaching from the material world. This is why a muslim who does not possess worldly things can still be regarded a worldly person because of their inner desire and love for it. Whereas, a muslim who possesses worldly things, like some of the righteous predecessors, can be considered detached from the material world as they do not desire and occupy their minds, hearts and actions with them. Instead they desire lies in the eternal hereafter.

The first level of abstinence is turning away from unlawful and vain desires which are not connected to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This person busies themselves in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities all the while focusing on the hereafter. They turn away from things and people who prevent them from fulfilling this important deed.

The next stage of abstinence is when one takes only the things they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities. They do not occupy their time on things which will not derive them benefit in the next world. This is the advice given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. He advised a muslim to live in this material world as a stranger or a traveller. Both types of people will only take what they need from the material world in order to reach their destination meaning, the hereafter safely. A muslim can achieve this by understanding how close their death and departure to the hereafter is. Not only can death pounce on a person at any time but even if one lives a long life it seems as though it passed in a moment. By realising this reality one sacrifices the moment for the sake of the eternal hereafter. Shortening one's hope for a long life in this material world will encourage them to perform righteous deeds, sincerely repent from their sins and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over all else. The one who hopes for a long life will be inspired to behave in the opposite manner.

The one who is truly abstinent in the material world neither blames it nor praises it. They do not rejoice when they gain it nor do they grieve when it

passes them by. The mind of this pious muslim is too focused on the eternal hereafter to greedily notice the small material world.

***“...but those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as grazing livestock eat...”***

This refers to greedily fulfilling one's desires without restriction or self-control.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and

turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“...but those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as grazing livestock eat...”***

This refers to greedily fulfilling one's desires without restriction or self-control.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less

worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“...but those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as grazing livestock eat...”***

This refers to greedily fulfilling one's desires without restriction or self-control.

It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

*“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”*

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what

they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

***“...but those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as grazing livestock eat, and the Fire will be a residence for them.”***

This refers to greedily fulfilling one's desires without restriction or self-control.

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

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Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

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Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a muslim is in danger of dying as a non-muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

*“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”*

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

***“Indeed, Allāh will admit those who have believed and done righteous deeds to gardens...but those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as grazing livestock eat, and the Fire will be a residence for them.”***

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely,

depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“Indeed, Allāh will admit those who have believed and done righteous deeds to gardens...but those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as grazing livestock eat, and the Fire will be a residence for them.”***

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freed has obtained happiness whereas the

other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“Indeed, Allāh will admit those who have believed and done righteous deeds to gardens...but those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as grazing livestock eat, and the Fire will be a residence for them.”***

The Holy Quran clearly declared the purpose of mankind in chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

***“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”***

Before one can worship Allah, the Exalted, they must first recognise Him as it is not possible to obey someone without knowledge. In addition, people must first learn how to worship Allah, the Exalted, before they can fulfil this task. Therefore, worship is followed by knowledge. This is why in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared seeking useful knowledge a duty on all muslims. Without knowledge one will never be able to worship Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Few good deeds performed with knowledge are far superior to many good deeds performed incorrectly because of ignorance.

As Allah, the Exalted, is the One who created mankind no one has the right to be served and worshipped except Him. If an employer easily dismisses their employee for abandoning the duty they have been hired for, how can it be correct to abandon serving and worshipping Allah, the Exalted, when

He alone created and sustains the creation? All of mankind have been granted free will and the ability to obey and worship Allah, the Exalted. So each person must decide whether they desire to fulfil their purpose of creation thereby receiving eternal reward or reject it and face punishment in both worlds. The same way a device, such as a mobile phone, which does not fulfil its primary purpose is discarded people may well be discarded on the Day of Judgement into Hell for failing to fulfil their primary purpose of existence.

It is important to note, that worship refers to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves 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. This obedience must encompass every part of one's life and body, such as their tongue. It includes a person's duty towards Allah, the Exalted, such as offering the prayer and treating the creation with kindness.

Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will be given the best rewards while those who disobey Him will receive the worst punishment in this world and the next. In a divine Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2466, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, narrates from Allah, the Exalted, who declares that if one busies themselves in worshipping Him, through sincere obedience, He will fill their heart with richness and remove their poverty. But if they turn away from His worship and obedience Allah, the Exalted, will fill their life with problems and not remove their poverty.

It is important to note, that Allah, the Exalted, does not need the creation in anyway whatsoever. As clearly mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6572, people only benefit themselves with their good deeds as it raises their ranks. And they only harm themselves with their sins as they will be held accountable for them. The infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, does not change at all irrespective of if the entire creation worshipped Him or not. Allah, the Exalted, is the sole Creator and sole Provider. It is people who are completely and utterly in need of Him. Whoever understands this and sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the purpose of their creation and will therefore be given an eternal reward.

***“Indeed, Allāh will admit those who have believed and done righteous deeds to gardens...but those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as grazing livestock eat, and the Fire will be a residence for them.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2559, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Paradise is surrounded by hardships and Hell is surrounded by desires.

This means the path which leads to Paradise contains difficulties and hardships. In most cases, a person cannot obtain good in this world without going through some sort of difficulty, such as exerting one's energy, then how can one believe they can obtain Paradise without facing difficulties? If one turns the pages of history they will observe the righteous always faced difficulties but as they knew the path of Paradise contained difficulties they maintained their focus on the destination instead of the difficulties. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that no one had been tested more than him in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472. Therefore, muslims must realize a fact that facing some difficulties in this world is an extremely small price to pay to obtain the permanent bliss of Paradise. Therefore, they should remain patient through all difficulties while focusing on the destination.

The path to Hell is full of desires. This indicates the importance of maintaining one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, at all times by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Even though it is not unlawful to enjoy lawful pleasures in this world a muslim should minimize these as much as possible as these lawful

desires often lead to unlawful desires. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who behaves in such a manner will safe guard their faith and honor. A muslim should never obey their desires or the desires of others if it means they will disobey Allah, the Exalted, as the pleasure of fulfilling desires vanishes quickly whereas the regret and the potential punishment will last long.

To conclude, a desire fulfilled will not make one feel better if they end up in Hell. And a difficulty one faces will not make them feel bad if they end up in Paradise.

***“Indeed, Allāh will admit those who have believed and done righteous deeds to gardens beneath which rivers flow, but those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as grazing livestock eat, and the Fire will be a residence for them.”***

If one desires to achieve peace and success in both worlds then they must use 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.

***“Indeed, Allāh will admit those who have believed and done righteous deeds to gardens beneath which rivers flow, but those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as grazing livestock eat, and the Fire will be a residence for them.”***

If one desires to achieve peace and success in both worlds then they must use 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.

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verse 13

وَكَايِن مِّن قَرْيَةٍ هِيَ أَشَدُّ قُوَّةً مِّن قَرْيِنِكَ الَّتِي أَخْرَجْنَاكَ  
أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ فَلَا نَاصِرَ لَهُمْ



*“And how many a city was stronger than your city [Mecca] which drove you out [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]? We destroyed them; and there was no helper for them.”*

***“And how many a city was stronger than your city [Mecca] which drove you out [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]?...”***

When the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca plotted to assassinate the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they ordered the group assigned with this evil task to wait outside the home of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and attack him while he slept. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, instructed Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, to take his place in his bed and guaranteed his safety so that he could migrate in secret. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left his home he recited the Holy Quran and Allah, the Exalted, temporarily took away the sight of the assassins. While walking through them the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, poured dirt on their heads and left. The assassins only realized what had occurred after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had left the area and when they were informed of what had occurred to them by a passer-by. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 153.

This miracle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, teaches Muslims that whenever they encounter a difficult situation they should remain firm on the obedience 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, trusting that He will provide them a way out of it even if this seems impossible at the time. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

*“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”*

A Muslim should understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best for His servants even if the wisdoms behind the difficulty are not obvious. It is a person's reaction which either leads to blessings or the anger of Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to reflect on the countless examples in their own life where they believed something was bad only to change their mind later on and vice versa. This is just like when a person takes a bitter medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. Even though the medicine is bitter they still take it believing it will benefit them. It is strange how a Muslim can trust a doctor whose knowledge is limited and who is not absolutely certain the bitter medicine will benefit them and fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge is infinite and when He only decrees the best for His servants.

A Muslim should understand the difference between wishful thinking and trust in Allah, the Exalted. The person who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, and then expects Him to help them in difficulties is a wishful thinker. The one who will gain the help of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated in this event, is the one who sincerely strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then trusts His judgment without complaining or questioning His choice.

***“And how many a city was stronger than your city [Mecca] which drove you out [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]? We destroyed them; and there was no helper for them.”***

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

***“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”***

***“And how many a city was stronger than your city [Mecca] which drove you out [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]? We destroyed them; and there was no helper for them.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be

thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And how many a city was stronger than your city [Mecca] which drove you out [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]? We destroyed them; and there was no helper for them.”***

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“And how many a city was stronger than your city [Mecca] which drove you out [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]? We destroyed them; and there was no helper for them.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verse 14

أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ كَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ وَاتَّبَعُوا  
أَهْوَاءَهُمْ

*“So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord like him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”*

***“So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord...”***

This path involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions 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 Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

***“So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord...”***

This path involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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.

***“...him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

This verse is connected to chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 38:

*“...And Satan had made pleasing to them their deeds and averted them from the path...”*

As mentioned in this verse the Devil fools people into committing sins and making wrong decisions by beautifying the incorrect choice for them. This occurs in situations when a person must make a choice between two or more options. It also occurs when the choice is between the lawful and unlawful and even between two lawful options. If the Devil cannot guide someone to a sin then he attempts to guide them to the inferior option, even if it is lawful, hoping it will lead to some sort of a sin, such as a person complaining about life and destiny. The Devil beautifies a choice by causing one to focus on its apparent benefit to such a degree that they lose focus on the bigger picture and the consequences of the choice. An adult then behaves like a child who makes choices without reflecting over the consequences of their actions. This is one of the main reasons why people commit sins. In reality, if one truly reflected on the punishment of sins they would never commit them.

Something which helps in situations like this is to mentally take a step back and assess the options by comparing their long-term benefits and harms. Only when the lawful benefits of something outweighs the harm should a person proceed. The other thing which helps is to deeply reflect

on the consequences of the potential options. Some choices might be lawful but if one goes ahead with them it may make their life difficult in the long run. For example, sometimes people rush into marriage with someone they apparently love. They base their decision solely on their feelings instead of reflecting on other more important aspects, for example, if their potential future spouse will make a good life partner or a good parent and if they will help them in their obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Many marriages have ended in divorce because the couple did not reflect on the long term implications of a potential marriage. Many people often claim their spouse was very different before they got married but in most cases they have not changed at all. The truth is that before marriage they did not spend so much time with them so they did not observe certain characteristics which became obvious after marriage.

Some often rush into action and later have regrets as their choice caused them more trouble and in many cases the issue was not a big deal in the first place. This type of action can only be avoided when one reflects on the situation and observes the bigger picture meaning, the wider and long-term implications and consequences of taking a step forward.

One should not only assess if something is lawful or unlawful before making a decision. Even though, this is the most important thing to consider yet, it is not the only thing. As many lawful incorrect choices, which are beautified by the Devil, can lead to trouble further on in life.

To sum up, before making any choice a person must take a step back and reflect deeply over its lawfulness and its potential long-term benefits

and harms under the guidance of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever acts like this will rarely make a wrong choice they later regret.

***“...him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

The Devil tries to convince muslims to always observe those who are worse than them in behaviour in order to justify their lack of striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and improving their character and behaviour for the better. For example, a muslim who offers their obligatory prayers once in a while will observe someone who does not pray at all in order to make themselves feel better. A thief will look at a murderer and convince themselves stealing is not so bad. The examples are endless. It is very strange how these muslims so easily observe those who appear worse than them in order to justify their lack of effort in obeying Allah, the Exalted, but these same people will not observe those who are in a worse off position than them when they face difficulties. For example, the person who suffers from back pain will not observe the one who is physically disabled so that it prevents them from complaining. This attitude has specifically been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513.

In addition, if observing those who appear worse in their behaviour does not save one from punishment in a worldly court, such as a thief being pardoned by a judge because there are many murderers in the world, how can one imagine this excuse will hold up in the court of Allah, the Exalted?

Muslims should therefore avoid this trap of the Devil by observing those who appear better than them so that they are inspired to improve their character and behaviour progressively for the pleasure of Allah, the

Exalted. This is what Allah, the Exalted, demands meaning, He does not demand perfection.

***“...him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

It is important to understand that no matter how much religious knowledge one obtains or how much worship and righteous deeds they perform they will never be safe from the attacks and traps of the Devil. This is because the Devil attacks each person according to how much knowledge they possess and how much righteous deeds they perform. For example, he will try to convince the muslim who is strict in offering their obligatory prayers not to offer them in congregation at the Mosque or by convincing them to delay their obligatory prayers beyond their starting times as he knows he will not be able to convince them to completely abandon the obligatory prayers. Whereas, in respect to the muslim who is struggling to establish their obligatory prayers he will attempt to convince them that they are too difficult to establish therefore they should only offer them when they are completely free. He tries to convince those who perform many voluntary righteous deeds not to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to improve their character so that they continue to destroy their good deeds through bad characteristics such as, lying and backing.

The Devil aims to prevent a person from reaching a higher level if he cannot convince them to fall in rank through disobedience to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, muslims should always be on guard against his attacks and traps by persistently striving to increase in rank, improve their character and avoid acts of disobedience which is all achieved by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“...him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3294, advises that whichever path the second rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, took the Devil would take a different path, meaning, out of fear of him. One of the reasons why the Devil acted in this way was because he had little influence over Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him. The Devil cannot physically force someone to commit sins. He instead encourages them to do so through whisperings. But in order for them to be effective he requires a person to possess some sort of worldly desire. Then through his whisperings he encourages the growth of this worldly desire until it drives the person to act on it thereby committing a sin. The reason the Devil had little effect on Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, was because he had removed worldly desires from his heart. His only desires were connected to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, if muslims desire to minimise the effect the Devil has on them they should remove unnecessary desires from their heart. This only occurs when one refrains from indulging in the excess and unnecessary aspects of this material world. The more they do this the more these worldly desires will leave their heart until they reach a point where they only desire to please Allah, the Exalted, in all their actions. The Devil will flee from this person as he knows he will have little effect on them. But the more one indulges in the unnecessary aspects of this material world the more worldly desires they will possess and therefore, the more influence the Devil will have over them.

***“...him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

It is important to note, the material world which one should detach from actually refers to one's desires. It does not refer to the physical world, such as the mountains. This is indicated by chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 14:

*“Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return [i.e., Paradise].”*

These things are connected to the desires of people and by them one becomes distracted from preparing for the hereafter. When one abstains from their desires they are in fact detaching from the material world. This is why a muslim who does not possess worldly things can still be regarded a worldly person because of their inner desire and love for it. Whereas, a muslim who possesses worldly things, like some of the righteous predecessors, can be considered detached from the material world as they do not desire and occupy their minds, hearts and actions with them. Instead they desire lies in the eternal hereafter.

The first level of abstinence is turning away from unlawful and vain desires which are not connected to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This person busies themselves in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities

all the while focusing on the hereafter. They turn away from things and people who prevent them from fulfilling this important deed.

The next stage of abstinence is when one takes only the things they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities. They do not occupy their time on things which will not derive them benefit in the next world. This is the advice given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. He advised a muslim to live in this material world as a stranger or a traveller. Both types of people will only take what they need from the material world in order to reach their destination meaning, the hereafter safely. A muslim can achieve this by understanding how close their death and departure to the hereafter is. Not only can death pounce on a person at any time but even if one lives a long life it seems as though it passed in a moment. By realising this reality one sacrifices the moment for the sake of the eternal hereafter. Shortening one's hope for a long life in this material world will encourage them to perform righteous deeds, sincerely repent from their sins and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over all else. The one who hopes for a long life will be inspired to behave in the opposite manner.

The one who is truly abstinent in the material world neither blames it nor praises it. They do not rejoice when they gain it nor do they grieve when it passes them by. The mind of this pious muslim is too focused on the eternal hereafter to greedily notice the small material world.

***“So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord like him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

The right path involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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.

***“So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord like him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

The right path involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others

especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord like him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

The right path involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a muslim is in danger of dying as a non-muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

*“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”*

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

***“So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord like him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

The right path involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Therefore, muslims must actualize their belief in the Day of Judgement by practically preparing for it. This involves 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.

***“So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord like him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

The right path involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who have been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been

given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord like him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

The right path involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2886, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, criticized the slaves of wealth and fine clothing. These people are pleased when they receive these things and become displeased when they do not.

In reality, this applies to all non-essential worldly things. This criticism is not directed at those who strive in the material world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted. But it is directed at those who either pursue the unlawful in order to obtain wealth and other worldly things in order to satisfy their desires and the desires of others. And it is directed at those who pursue non-essential lawful things in such a way that it causes them to neglect obeying Allah, the Exalted, correctly. This obedience involves 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. This prevents them from preparing adequately for the hereafter and their final judgment.

In addition, this criticism is for those who are impatient when they do not obtain their unnecessary desires in this world. This attitude can cause a muslim to obey Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, they obey Him when they obtain their desires but when they do not they angrily turn away from His obedience. The Holy Quran has warned of a severe loss in both worlds for the one who adopts this attitude. 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.”*

Muslims should instead learn to be patient and content with what they possess as this is true richness according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2420. In reality, the person full of desires is needy meaning, poor even if they possess much wealth. A muslim should know Allah, the Exalted, grants people what is best for them and not according to their desires as this in most cases would lead to their destruction. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

*“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Aware and Seeing.”*

***“So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord like him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

The right path involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For

example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord like him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

The right path involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the

less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord like him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

The right path involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

*“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”*

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not

obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

***“So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord like him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

The right path involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person who imitates a people is counted as one of them.

All muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly warns that a muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done 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.

But those who verbally declare their love for the righteous and fail to imitate them and instead imitate the characteristics found in hypocrites and the sinful will be considered and judged as one of them. This does not mean they will lose their faith but it means they will be judged as disobedient muslims. How can a disobedient muslim be counted as an

obedient muslim and end up with the righteous? This is only wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 20:

*“Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise. The companions of Paradise - they are the attainers [of success].”*

***“So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord like him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

The right path involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ignorance prevents one from adopting the correct path.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord like him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive and they follow their [own] desires?”***

The right path involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ignorance prevents one from adopting the correct path. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart

which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verse 15

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وَعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَّاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ  
وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ خَمْرٍ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ  
وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ عَسَلٍ مُصَفًّى وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنْ  
رَبِّهِمْ كَمَنْ هُوَ خَالِدٌ فِي نَارٍ وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ



*“Is the description of Paradise, which the righteous are promised, wherein are rivers of water unaltered, rivers of milk the taste of which never changes, rivers of wine delicious to those who drink, and rivers of purified honey, in which they will have from all [kinds of] fruits and forgiveness from their Lord. [Are its inhabitants] like those who abide eternally in the Fire and are given to drink scalding water that will sever their intestines?”*

***“Is the description of Paradise, which the righteous are promised...”***

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and

slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“Is the description of Paradise, which the righteous are promised...”***

Righteousness involves practically supporting one’s declaration of faith with good actions.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“Is the description of Paradise, which the righteous are promised, wherein are rivers of water unaltered, rivers of milk the taste of which never changes, rivers of wine delicious to those who drink, and rivers of purified honey, in which they will have from all [kinds of] fruits...”***

Allah, the Exalted, gives people according to what they do. For example, the Holy Quran mentions that if one remembers Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will remember them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

*“So remember Me; I will remember you...”*

Feeding others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is just the same. The one who performs this righteous deed will be fed food from Paradise and whoever gives drink to others will be given drink from Paradise on Judgement Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2449.

When asked about the best type of Islam the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6236, that feeding others and greeting others with kind speech are the best traits in Islam.

***“Is the description of Paradise, which the righteous are promised...and forgiveness from their Lord...”***

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“Is the description of Paradise, which the righteous are promised, wherein are rivers of water unaltered, rivers of milk the taste of which never changes, rivers of wine delicious to those who drink, and rivers of purified honey, in which they will have from all [kinds of] fruits and forgiveness from their Lord...”***

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may

Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

***“Is the description of Paradise, which the righteous are promised, wherein are rivers of water unaltered, rivers of milk the taste of which never changes, rivers of wine delicious to those who drink, and rivers of purified honey, in which they will have from all [kinds of] fruits and forgiveness from their Lord. [Are its inhabitants] like those who abide eternally in the Fire and are given to drink scalding water that will sever their intestines?”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person who imitates a people is counted as one of them.

All muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly warns that a muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done 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.

But those who verbally declare their love for the righteous and fail to imitate them and instead imitate the characteristics found in hypocrites and the sinful will be considered and judged as one of them. This does not mean they will lose their faith but it means they will be judged as disobedient muslims. How can a disobedient muslim be counted as an obedient muslim

and end up with the righteous? This is only wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 20:

*“Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise. The companions of Paradise - they are the attainers [of success].”*

***“Is the description of Paradise, which the righteous are promised, wherein are rivers of water unaltered, rivers of milk the taste of which never changes, rivers of wine delicious to those who drink, and rivers of purified honey, in which they will have from all [kinds of] fruits and forgiveness from their Lord. [Are its inhabitants] like those who abide eternally in the Fire and are given to drink scalding water that will sever their intestines?”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2559, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Paradise is surrounded by hardships and Hell is surrounded by desires.

This means the path which leads to Paradise contains difficulties and hardships. In most cases, a person cannot obtain good in this world without going through some sort of difficulty, such as exerting one's energy, then how can one believe they can obtain Paradise without facing difficulties? If one turns the pages of history they will observe the righteous always faced difficulties but as they knew the path of Paradise contained difficulties they maintained their focus on the destination instead of the difficulties. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that no one had been tested more than him in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472. Therefore, muslims must realize a fact that facing some difficulties in this world is an extremely small price to pay to obtain the permanent bliss of Paradise. Therefore, they should remain patient through all difficulties while focusing on the destination.

The path to Hell is full of desires. This indicates the importance of maintaining one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, at all times by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Even though it is not unlawful to enjoy lawful pleasures in this world a muslim should minimize these as much as possible as these lawful desires often lead to unlawful desires. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who behaves in such a manner will safe guard their faith and honor. A muslim should never obey their desires or the desires of others if it means they will disobey Allah, the Exalted, as the pleasure of fulfilling desires vanishes quickly whereas the regret and the potential punishment will last long.

To conclude, a desire fulfilled will not make one feel better if they end up in Hell. And a difficulty one faces will not make them feel bad if they end up in Paradise.

***“...[Are its inhabitants] like those who abide eternally in the Fire and are given to drink scalding water that will sever their intestines?”***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of

righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verses 16-17

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا خَرَجُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مَاذَا قَالَ آنِفًا أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ﴿١٦﴾

وَالَّذِينَ أَهْتَدُوا زَادَهُمْ هُدًىٰ وَءَانَّهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ ﴿١٧﴾

*“And among them are those who hear you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], until when they depart from you, they say to those who were given knowledge, “What has he said just now?” Those are the ones of whom Allah has sealed over their hearts and who have followed their [own] desires.*

*And those who are guided - He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness.”*

***“And among them are those who hear you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], until when they depart from you, they say to those who were given knowledge, "What has he said just now?" Those are the ones...who have followed their [own] desires. And those who are guided - He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness.”***

The difference between the two is that even though both people received the knowledge yet only the former implemented it even if it contradicted their desires. This leads to an increase in guidance and the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

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 among them are those who hear you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], until when they depart from you, they say...“What has he said just now?” Those are the ones of whom Allah has sealed over their hearts and who have followed their [own] desires.”***

Adopting this type of selective hearing is a result of one following their own desires. When one fails to use their senses correctly it leads to them becoming sealed.

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier yet the strength of muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge namely, they believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

***“And among them are those who hear you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], until when they depart from you, they say... “What has he said just now?” Those are the ones of whom Allah has sealed over their hearts and who have followed their [own] desires.”***

Adopting this type of selective hearing is a result of one following their own desires. When one fails to use their senses correctly it leads to them becoming sealed.

Listening correctly to the word of Allah, the Exalted, is the only way one can correctly adhere to its teachings. It is important to understand the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is simply acknowledging a sound with one’s mind even if they fail to make sense of the noise. For example, a person may hear someone shouting at them from a great distance but they will not be able to understand what they are saying. Whereas, listening involves hearing a sound and understanding it so that one’s behaviour changes. For example, a person giving a specific verbal instruction to another who responds appropriately after hearing and understanding the instructions.

Muslims need to hear the word of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to understand it so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way. Unfortunately, many Muslims have failed to live up to this in respect to the Holy Quran as they are good at hearing the recitation of the Holy Quran but fail to correctly listen to it which involves understanding and acting on its teachings.

To conclude, simply hearing the word of Allah, the Exalted, is not good enough to obtain success one must strive to instead truly listen to it.

***“And among them are those who hear you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], until when they depart from you, they say... “What has he said just now?” Those are the ones of whom Allah has sealed over their hearts and who have followed their [own] desires.”***

Adopting this type of selective hearing is a result of one following their own desires. When one fails to use their senses correctly it leads to them becoming sealed.

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one’s actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should

think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in

fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“And those who are guided - He increases them in guidance...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who guides His servants to what is beneficial for them in both worlds and guides them away from anything which harms them. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verse 8:

*“And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness.”*

The muslim who understands this divine name will seek guidance in worldly and religious matters from none other than Allah, the Exalted, through the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever seeks guidance from anything else will not find lasting success.

A muslim should act on this divine name by guiding others towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and what is beneficial to them in both worldly and religious matters according to their knowledge. This will ensure they become a true believer meaning, the one who loves for others what they desire for themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

***“And those who are guided - He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness.”***

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds He blesses their five senses so that they use them in obedience to Him. This righteous servant will very rarely commit sins. This increase in guidance has been indicated in Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

This muslim reaches the level of excellence which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when a muslim performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will guard their mind and body from sins. This is the one who when they speak they speak for Allah, the Exalted, when they are silent they are silent for Allah, the Exalted. When they act they act for Him and when they are still they are for His sake. This is an aspect of monotheism and understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this muslim’s supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge

and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.

***“And those who are guided - He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness.”***

This verse is connected to chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

*“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”*

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfil the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's day. A muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the

more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

***“And those who are guided - He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness.”***

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 those who are guided - He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness.”***

The root of this is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become

misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“And those who are guided - He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness.”***

Remembering this fact prevents pride. The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. And any evil they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them Muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bears this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themselves if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches Muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles themselves before Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 215:

*“And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari’s, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63, shows that humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

*“And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly...”*

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

*“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”*

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom’s worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verse 18

فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً <sup>عَل</sup> فَقَدْ جَاءَ أَشْرَاطُهَا  
فَأَنَّى لَهُمْ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ ذِكْرُهُمْ



*“Then do they await except that the Hour should come upon them unexpectedly? But already there have come [some of] its indications. Then how [i.e., what good] to them, when it has come, will be their remembrance?”*

***“Then do they await except that the Hour should come upon them unexpectedly? But already there have come [some of] its indications. Then how [i.e., what good] to them, when it has come, will be their remembrance?”***

In reality, when someone dies their Judgement Day begins. Therefore, even if some believe that Judgement Day is far away, one's death is certainly not. The indications of one's death are many, such as ageing, illness, etc. In addition, many indications of Judgement Day have already occurred, such as the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5301.

Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The only way

to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

***“Then do they await except that the Hour should come upon them unexpectedly? But already there have come [some of] its indications. Then how [i.e., what good] to them, when it has come, will be their remembrance?”***

In reality, when someone dies their Judgement Day begins. Therefore, even if some believe that Judgement Day is far away, one's death is certainly not. The indications of one's death are many, such as ageing, illness, etc. In addition, many indications of Judgement Day have already occurred, such as the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5301.

It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of the material world. Unfortunately, muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared.

It is important for muslims to understand that no matter how long they live life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of

Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A muslim only fails preparing for the hereafter correctly because of their pursuit of the excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities.

A muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“Then do they await except that the Hour should come upon them unexpectedly? But already there have come [some of] its indications. Then how [i.e., what good] to them, when it has come, will be their remembrance?”***

In reality, when someone dies their Judgement Day begins. Therefore, even if some believe that Judgement Day is far away, one's death is certainly not. The indications of one's death are many, such as ageing, illness, etc. In addition, many indications of Judgement Day have already occurred, such as the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5301.

When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing. Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim they stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that they stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, muslims do not treat it like one. Instead, they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.

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A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

*“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.” But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”*

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

***“Then do they await except that the Hour should come upon them unexpectedly? But already there have come [some of] its indications. Then how [i.e., what good] to them, when it has come, will be their remembrance?”***

In reality, when someone dies their Judgement Day begins. Therefore, even if some believe that Judgement Day is far away, one's death is certainly not. The indications of one's death are many, such as ageing, illness, etc. In addition, many indications of Judgement Day have already occurred, such as the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5301.

It is important for muslims to understand that whenever they face any type of worldly failure or regrets they should remind themselves of the regrets in the hereafter some people will have, such as the one mentioned in chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

*“He will say, “Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.””*

In this world one's regret will always be followed by another chance or other options which they can pursue in order to gain success once again. But the regret and failure of the hereafter is something which cannot be

rectified meaning, there are no second chances in the next world. No one will have the opportunity to return to Earth in order to act differently.

Therefore, every muslim should be more concerned with the failures they may encounter in the hereafter over the failures and regrets of this world. This does not mean one should not strive to achieve lawful success in this world. It means they should always prioritise gaining success in the hereafter over gaining success in this world. This is an important mentality muslims should adopt before they reach a day where reflecting on their failures and regrets will not help them in the slightest. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“Then do they await except that the Hour should come upon them unexpectedly? But already there have come [some of] its indications. Then how [i.e., what good] to them, when it has come, will be their remembrance?”***

In reality, when someone dies their Judgement Day begins. Therefore, even if some believe that Judgement Day is far away, one’s death is certainly not. The indications of one’s death are many, such as ageing, illness, etc. In addition, many indications of Judgement Day have already occurred, such as the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5301.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2306, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to hasten in performing righteous deeds before seven things occur.

The first is overwhelming poverty. This can refer to financial difficulties which distract a person from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. In addition, stressing over wealth can even push one towards the unlawful. A muslim should remember that any righteous deed rooted in the unlawful will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. Allah, the Exalted, has allocated provision for the entire creation over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Therefore, a muslim should trust that

their lawful provision will reach them as long as they continue to strive for it in lawful ways according to the teachings of Islam. A muslim should remember that Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants according to His infinite wisdom. He does not give according to someone's desires as this will most likely lead to their destruction. 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 chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

*"And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills..."*

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims should hasten in performing righteous deeds before they become distracted by wealth. Wealth itself is not evil but depending on how one obtains it and uses it can either make it a great blessing for them or a great burden for them in both worlds. If a muslim strives to obtain excess wealth while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people while hoarding or misspending their wealth it will become a great curse for them in both worlds. But if a muslim obtains enough to fulfill their needs and the

needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance and spends in other ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, then they will achieve true richness in both worlds.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion which prevents righteous actions is a debilitating sickness. This is a warning to make use of one's good health before they encounter sickness. One should observe those who have lost their good health either through sickness or through ageing and therefore make use of the good health they possess by striving to gain success in lawful worldly matters as well as religious matters while giving priority to religion over the world. For example, a muslim should use their good health to journey to the Mosques regularly in order to offer their obligatory prayers with congregation before a time comes when they desire to do this but do not possess the physical strength to do so. The amazing thing about utilizing one's good health correctly is that when a muslim eventually loses it Allah, the Exalted, will continue to grant them the same reward they used to receive when doing good deeds during their time of good health. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. But those who live in heedlessness fail to utilise their good health and therefore receive no reward during their good health or when they fall ill.

This is connected to the next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion namely, senility. A muslim should make use of their youth and strong intelligence before they reach senility. This includes gaining and acting on knowledge and using one's mental strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It is important to behave in this manner before senility occurs as even the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings

be upon him, sought refuge from senility in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6390.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion which prevents righteous actions is a sudden death. Death is certain but the time is unknown. A muslim should not live in heedlessness believing that their death is far away as countless people have and will die long before reaching their life expectancy. Nor should they live in such a way as if they are not going to die at all. Having hopes of a long life can be considered the root of all evil as it causes one to delay performing righteous deeds believing they can always perform them tomorrow. It causes them to delay sincere repentance thereby, failing to change for the better believing they can do this tomorrow. And having hopes for a long life causes one to prioritize obtaining worldly things, such as wealth, in order to make their expected long life on this Earth comfortable. These prevent one from preparing adequately for the hereafter. Muslims should therefore reduce their hope for a long life so that they change for the better and direct their focus to the permanent hereafter. Muslims should not delay and instead act today as the tomorrow they hope for may never arrive. They should also strive to perform the righteous deeds which will benefit them in case their life ends unexpectedly, such as an ongoing charity, which benefits others as long as the thing is being used, such as a water well. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the arrival of the anti-Christ. This event will prevent one from performing righteous deeds and instead tempt them towards disbelief. One lesson to learn from this is the importance of avoiding doubtful things. Just like a person who journeys close to a border is more likely to cross it similarly, a muslim who

is surrounded by temptations will more likely be led astray and fail to perform righteous deeds. The one who avoids places and things which tempt them to commit sins will protect their faith and honour. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. Muslims should therefore guard their faith by avoiding things, places and the people who invite or tempt them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and ensure their dependents, such as their children, do the same.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion which prevents one from performing righteous deeds is the Final Hour.

This is when the trumpet blast will occur. 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 this world 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.

***“Then do they await except that the Hour should come upon them unexpectedly?...Then how [i.e., what good] to them, when it has come, will be their remembrance?”***

As the commencement of the Day of Judgement is unknown one must use every opportunity to prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has 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 do they await except that the Hour should come upon them unexpectedly?...Then how [i.e., what good] to them, when it has come, will be their remembrance?”***

As the commencement of the Day of Judgement is unknown one must use every opportunity to prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“Then do they await except that the Hour should come upon them unexpectedly?...Then how [i.e., what good] to them, when it has come, will be their remembrance?”***

The source of being motivated to practically prepare for the Day of Judgement is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge as this leads to certainty of faith.

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verse 19

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لِذُنُوبِكُمْ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوَاكُمْ ﴿١٩﴾

*“So know that there is no deity except Allah and ask forgiveness for your lapses [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and for the believing men and believing women. And Allah knows of your movement and your resting place.”*

***“So know that there is no deity except Allah...”***

This is a command to gain and act on Islamic knowledge as what has been mentioned in the remaining part of the verse cannot be known, understood or implemented without seeking and acting on Islamic knowledge.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever follows a path seeking knowledge Allah, the Exalted, will make the path to Paradise easy for them.

This indicates both a physical path someone takes seeking knowledge, such as attending lectures and classes, and a path whereby someone seeks knowledge without a physical journey. It encompasses all forms of knowledge, such as listening, reading, studying and writing about knowledge. The path to Paradise has many obstacles preventing a muslim from reaching it. Only the one who possesses knowledge of them and how to overcome them will reach Paradise safely. In addition, it easily understood that a person cannot reach a city in this world without knowledge of its location and the route which leads to it. Similarly, Paradise cannot be obtained without knowing these things about it, such as the path leading to it.

But the important thing to note is that a muslim's intention to seek and act on knowledge must be to please Allah, the Exalted. Whoever seeks religious knowledge for a worldly reason, such as showing off, will end up in Hell if they fail to sincerely repent. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253.

In addition, a muslim must strive to act on their knowledge as knowledge without action is of no value or benefit. This is like the one who possesses knowledge of a path to safety but does not take it and instead remains in an area full of dangers. This is why knowledge can be split into two categories. The first is when one acts on their knowledge, which leads to piety and an increase in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. The second is when one fails to act on their knowledge. This type will not increase one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in fact, it will only increase them in arrogance believing they are superior to others even though they are like donkeys which carry books that do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

***“So know that there is no deity except Allah...”***

This is a command to gain and act on Islamic knowledge as what has been mentioned in the remaining part of the verse cannot be known, understood or implemented without seeking and acting on Islamic knowledge. This leads to certainty of faith.

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

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The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“So know that there is no deity except Allāh...”***

There are many Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which advise mankind that whoever testifies that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted, will be saved from the fire of Hell. One such example is found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128.

The meaning of these Hadiths is that whoever dies while believing in this testimony will either enter Paradise and escape Hell or they will enter Hell to the extent of their sins and then eventually be allowed into Paradise where they will dwell forever. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7510.

It is important to note, that those who desire to enter Paradise without entering Hell first must not only declare their belief in Islam verbally but they must also fulfil its conditions and obligations. The testimony of faith is undoubtedly the key to Paradise but a key needs teeth in order to unlock a specific door. The teeth of the key to Paradise are its obligations and duties. Without them meaning, the key without its teeth, will not open the door to Paradise. This is proven through many Hadiths which indicate entry into Paradise requires one to fulfil the conditions and duties of Islam. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1397, indicates that the testimony must be supported by actions in the form of the pillars of Islam, such as establishing the obligatory prayers.

The first part of the testimony namely, there is none worthy of worship save Allah, the Exalted, means that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who must be obeyed and never disobeyed. When one accepts Allah, the Exalted, as their God they must not obey anything which leads to His disobedience as Allah, the Exalted, alone is their Master and they are only His slaves. But the moment one obeys anything which leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they have corrupted their belief in His Oneness which has been indicated in chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

*“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”*

The Holy Quran has warned muslims that whoever commits sins is in reality worshipping the Devil as they have obeyed him over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 36 Yaseen, verse 60:

*“Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam, that you not worship Satan - [for] indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”*

The muslims who reject their desires, the desires of others and the commands of the Devil and instead only obey Allah, the Exalted, have truly taken Allah, the Exalted, as their God. These muslims have been granted

the protection of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These muslims have practically actualised the testimony of Islam as they supported their verbal and internal claim with sincere actions according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When one acts according to his traditions they have fulfilled the second aspect of the testimony namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted. These muslims are the ones referred to in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128. It advises they will be saved from the Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted.

The person who declares Islam with the tongue and internally accepts it is undoubtedly a muslim but their true sincere belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, is diminished according to their sins.

An aspect of truly acting on the testimony is sincerely loving Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has indicated this in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. It advises that this is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is when one loves what Allah, the Exalted, loves and hates what He hates. As this was the characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2333, muslims have been commanded to follow 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...”*

It is clear from Islamic teachings that loving what Allah, the Exalted, hates and disliking what Allah, the Exalted, loves is a clear indication of a person following their own desires and obeying them over Allah, the Exalted. This attitude reduces one's belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. The following verse makes it clear that adopting this mentality is a deviation from true belief in the testimony of Islam. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 24:

*“Say, [O Muhammad], “If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.””*

The one who worships Allah, the Exalted, according to their own desires worships Him on the edge. Meaning, when they face times of ease they become pleased but when they encounter difficulties they turn away from His obedience in anger. 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 Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, informs muslims how to correctly believe and act on the testimony of faith, which prevents one being harmed by the fire of Hell in the next world. This is to first complete the obligatory duties correctly while fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes. Then one must add to this by performing voluntary righteous deeds, the best of which are the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the love of Allah, the Exalted, and causes Allah, the Exalted, to empower every organ of their body so that they only obey Him. This true and sincere obedience is the fulfilment of the testimony of faith. This is the sound heart which contains only the love of Allah, the Exalted, and is free of worldly desires and the love of the material world. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

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

It is important to note, this does not mean a muslim becomes free from committing sins but it means they sincerely repent from them whenever they are rarely committed.

To conclude, it is vital for muslims to not only declare the testimony of Islam internally and verbally but they must also show it in their actions as this is the only way to achieve true success in this world and completely escape punishment in the next world also.

***“...and ask forgiveness for your lapses [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...”***

The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were protected from committing sins but occasionally they may have decided to do something lawful even though another path was the better and more favoured option by Allah, the Exalted. For normal people this would not even be considered a lapse yet it would be for the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, as they were on the high station of Prophethood. The higher one's station the more stricter their accountability. In addition, this verse could also be referring to the fact that worshipping and obeying Allah, the Exalted, the way He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped is simply impossible. So the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, would seek forgiveness for their efforts as they believed their obedience and worship was not worthy of Allah, the Exalted.

Finally, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has been commanded to seek forgiveness for his lapses it increases the seriousness of the command in respect to his followers.

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 ask forgiveness for...the believing men and believing women...”***

This is an aspect of being sincere 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 ask forgiveness for...the believing men and believing women...”***

As no time restriction has been placed on this verse, one must adopt the characteristics of true belief if they desire this supplication to include them.

True belief involves sincerity. 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: Allah, the Exalted, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran and to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives

priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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 ask forgiveness for...the believing men and believing women...”***

As no time restriction has been placed on this verse, one must adopt the characteristics of true belief if they desire this supplication to include them.

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“...and ask forgiveness for...the believing men and believing women...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or wealth. Even though, many muslims have erected these barriers such as social castes and sects thereby believing some are better than others Islam has clearly rejected this concept and declared that in this respect all people are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

***“...And Allah knows of your movement...”***

This could indicate the importance of using one's physical strength and good health in the correct way.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that there are two blessings people often do not appreciate until they lose them namely, good health and free time.

Good health is a special blessing as it allows a person to take advantage of gaining other blessings related to the world and religion. One of the wisdoms behind minor illnesses is that they should inspire a muslim to be grateful for good health. True gratitude is when one uses the blessings they possess, in this case good health, in the correct way as prescribed by Islam. One should observe those who have lost their good health either through sickness or through ageing and therefore make use of the good health they possess by striving to gain success in lawful worldly matters as well as religious matters while giving priority to religion over the material world. For example, one should use their good health to journey to the Mosques in order to offer their prayers with congregation before a time comes when they desire to do this but do not possess the physical strength to do so. They should keep voluntary fasts especially during the short days of winter before they lose their good health. The amazing thing about utilizing one's health correctly is that when they eventually lose it Allah, the Exalted, will continue to grant them the same reward they used to receive when doing good deeds during their good health. This has been advised in

a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. But those who live in heedlessness fail to utilise their good health and therefore receive no reward during their good health or when they fall sick.

One aspect of appreciating and showing true gratitude for good health is to help those who have lost their good health in whatever way possible such as emotional or financial help. It is important to regularly ponder over the sick as this will inspire one to use their good health correctly.

Finally, those who utilize their good health correctly will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, during their periods of sickness. Whereas, those who do not will not receive this support and will therefore become impatient when facing sickness. This negative attitude will only lead to further trouble for them.

***“...And Allah knows of your movement...”***

This could indicate the importance of using one's physical strength and good health in the correct way.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2417, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a person's feet will not move on Judgment Day until they answer five questions.

The final question will be about one's body and how they used it. A muslim must therefore use every organ of their body such as their sight and hearing in the correct way as prescribed by Islam as this is true gratitude which will lead to further blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

In addition, they must use their physical strength in manners which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, before they reach a day when they lose it and are no longer able to perform righteous deeds. It is hoped that the one who uses their strength in the correct way will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, during their time of weakness.

Finally, a muslim must keep their physical and verbal harm away from the self and possessions of others as this is a sign of a true muslim and believer. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

***“...And Allah knows...your resting place.”***

This could be referring to one's grave. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3120, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person will be asked three questions in the grave.

The first question will be who is your Lord? In order to answer this question correctly a muslim must not only believe in Allah, the Exalted, but prove this belief through actions. This is only achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing His decrees with patience. It is this very proof which will support a muslim in their grave when they encounter this question. It is important to note, that even some non-muslims believe in Allah, the Exalted, yet they will fail to answer this question correctly as they did not obey Him correctly during their lives. If only believing in Him was enough then these non-muslims would succeed in this question. But it is quite evident they will not succeed.

The next question will be what is your religion? If a muslim desires to answer this correctly they must not only believe in Islam but practically implement its teachings in their everyday life. This involves sincerely striving to obtain and act on its teachings. It is the reason gaining useful knowledge has been made a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

The final question according to this Hadith will be who is your Prophet? It is important to note, that even some of the past nations believed in their Prophets, peace be upon them, but as they did not follow in their footsteps correctly they will fail in answering this question correctly. If a muslim desires to answer this question correctly they must not only verbally declare their belief in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but actively learn and act on his traditions. This is the very purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, meaning, to practically follow them. 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.”*

The mercy, love and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, which will help a muslim answer this question correctly is only possible to obtain through this method. 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 Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.””*

***“...And Allah knows...your resting place.”***

This could be referring to one's grave. Many verses and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discuss the grave which all people will face in some form or fashion. As it is inevitable muslims must prepare for it as the light or darkness of the grave does not come from the grave itself. It is one's deeds which either darkens or illuminates their grave. Similarly, it is one's deeds which will determine if they face punishment or mercy in their grave. The only way to prepare for it is through piety which consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Muslims often journey to cemeteries in order to bury their relatives and friends. But very few truly realize that one day, sooner or later, their turn will come. Even though, the majority of muslims dedicate the majority of their efforts to pleasing their family and earning wealth over pleasing Allah, the Exalted, through righteous deeds a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, warns that these two things which muslims give priority to will abandon them at their grave and only their deeds will remain with them. Therefore, it makes sense for a muslim to give priority to obtaining righteous deeds to pleasing their family and obtaining excess wealth. This does not mean one should abandon their family and wealth. But it means they should fulfil their duty to their family according to the teachings of Islam without going overboard by neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and only obtain the wealth they require to achieve this. When this is done correctly it becomes a righteous deed as well. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. One should never abandon their duties to Allah, the Exalted, for the sake of their family or wealth as this will only lead to an isolated, lonely and dark grave.

***“...And Allah knows...your [final] resting place.”***

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 Allah knows...your [final] resting place.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2559, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Paradise is surrounded by hardships and Hell is surrounded by desires.

This means the path which leads to Paradise contains difficulties and hardships. In most cases, a person cannot obtain good in this world without going through some sort of difficulty, such as exerting one's energy, then how can one believe they can obtain Paradise without facing difficulties? If one turns the pages of history they will observe the righteous always faced difficulties but as they knew the path of Paradise contained difficulties they maintained their focus on the destination instead of the difficulties. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that no one had been tested more than him in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472. Therefore, muslims must realize a fact that facing some difficulties in this world is an extremely small price to pay to obtain the permanent bliss of Paradise. Therefore, they should remain patient through all difficulties while focusing on the destination.

The path to Hell is full of desires. This indicates the importance of maintaining one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, at all times by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Even though it is not unlawful to enjoy lawful pleasures in this world a muslim should minimize these as much as possible as these lawful desires often lead to unlawful desires. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who behaves in such a manner will safe guard their faith and honor. A muslim should

never obey their desires or the desires of others if it means they will disobey Allah, the Exalted, as the pleasure of fulfilling desires vanishes quickly whereas the regret and the potential punishment will last long.

To conclude, a desire fulfilled will not make one feel better if they end up in Hell. And a difficulty one faces will not make them feel bad if they end up in Paradise.

***“...And Allāh knows of your movement and your resting place.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“...And Allāh knows of your movement and your resting place [at night].”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2347, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that his true friend is the one who possesses the following characteristics.

One these characteristics is that this muslim obeys 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, in public and in private. Doing so in private indicates a person’s sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they only perform righteous deeds for His sake. This is the one who firmly remembers that no matter where they are the inner and outer aspects of their being is constantly being observed by Allah, the Exalted. If one persists on this belief they will adopt excellence of faith which is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. It means they act, such as performing the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, watching them. This encourages righteous deeds and prevents sins.

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verses 20-21

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَتْ سُورَةٌ فَإِذَا أُنزِلَتْ  
سُورَةٌ مُحْكَمَةٌ وَذُكِرَ فِيهَا الْقِتَالُ رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ  
مَرَضٌ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ نَظَرَ الْمَغْشِيِّ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ  
فَأَوْلَىٰ لَهُمْ ﴿٢٠﴾

طَاعَةٌ وَقَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ فَإِذَا عَزَمَ الْأَمْرَ فَلَوْ صَدَقُوا اللَّهَ  
لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ ﴿٢١﴾

*“Those who believe say, “Why has a sūrah [chapter of the Holy Quran] not been sent down?” But when a precise sūrah is revealed and battle is mentioned therein, you see those in whose hearts is disease looking at you with a look of one overcome by death. And more appropriate for them [would have been].*

*Obedience and good words. And when the matter [of fighting] was determined, if they had been true to Allah, it would have been better for them.”*

### ***“Those who believe...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone

else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“Those who believe say, “Why has a sūrah [chapter of the Holy Quran] not been sent down?” But when a precise sūrah is revealed and battle is mentioned therein, you see those in whose hearts is disease looking at you with a look of one overcome by death...”***

Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, desired to defend themselves from the constant persecution of the non-muslims of Mecca but they were initially commanded not to fight and instead remain patient. When fighting was decreed those who possessed weak faith and the hypocrites became adverse to it.

In life a muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties than when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

***“Those who believe say, “Why has a sūrah [chapter of the Holy Quran] not been sent down?” But when a precise sūrah is revealed and battle is mentioned therein, you see those in whose hearts is disease looking at you with a look of one overcome by death...”***

Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, desired to defend themselves from the constant persecution of the non-muslims of Mecca but they were initially commanded not to fight and instead remain patient. When fighting was decreed those who possessed weak faith and the hypocrites became adverse to it.

It is important for muslims to understand that Allah, the Exalted, does not demand muslims to overcome the difficulties which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, endured. For example, they migrated from Mecca to Medina whereby they left behind their families, homes, businesses and migrated to a strange land all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

In comparison, the difficulties muslims face now are not as difficult as those the righteous predecessors faced. Muslims should therefore be grateful that they are only required to make a few small sacrifices, such as sacrificing some sleep to offer the obligatory dawn prayer and some wealth to donate the obligatory charity. Allah, the Exalted, is not commanding them to leave their homes and families for His sake. This gratitude must be shown practically by using the blessings one possesses in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, when a muslim faces difficulties they should remember the difficulties the righteous predecessors faced and how they overcame them through steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This knowledge can provide a muslim the strength to overcome their difficulties as they know the righteous predecessors were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they endured more severe difficulties with patience. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, advises that the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, endured the most difficult of tests and they are undoubtedly the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted.

If a muslim follows the steadfast attitude of the righteous predecessors it is hoped they will end up with them in the hereafter.

***“Those who believe say, “Why has a sūrah [chapter of the Holy Quran] not been sent down?” But when a precise sūrah is revealed and battle is mentioned therein, you see those in whose hearts is disease looking at you with a look of one overcome by death...”***

Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, desired to defend themselves from the constant persecution of the non-muslims of Mecca but they were initially commanded not to fight and instead remain patient. When fighting was decreed those who possessed weak faith and the hypocrites became adverse to it.

The corruption and hardness of the spiritual heart is an extremely important matter which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that when the spiritual heart becomes corrupt then the whole body becomes corrupt. This corruption is then reflected in one’s speech and actions. Similarly, the Holy Quran has highlighted the importance of a soft and sound heart by advising that one will not derive benefit from their possessions or relatives on Judgment Day unless they possess a sound spiritual heart. Chapter 26 Ash Shu’ara, verses 88-89:

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

The one with a hard spiritual heart can be described as a person who rejects the truth when it is presented to them believing they are superior

in knowledge. They lack submission and the fear of Allah, the Exalted, which leads to abandoning good deeds, committing sins, excessive love and striving for the material world while remaining heedless to preparing for the eternal hereafter. The hard hearted are easily influenced by the Devil into committing sins and rejecting good deeds. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 53:

*“[That is] so He may make what Satan throws in [i.e., asserts] a trial for those within whose hearts is disease and those hard of heart...”*

Two specific blameworthy characteristics are adopted by the one who possesses a hard spiritual heart. They intentionally misinterpret divine scriptures in order to fulfil their own desires such as obtaining fame. They criticise those who strive to adhere to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they desire people to follow their thinking and love for the material world. The second is that they cherry pick verses and Hadiths which suit their desires. They label those who strive to adopt and act on all verses and Hadiths as extremists thereby making their own attitude seem pleasing to others. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 13:

*“So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened. They distort words from their [proper] places [i.e., usages] and have forgotten a portion of that of which they were reminded. And you will still observe deceit among them, except a few of them...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned that those who talk excessively without mentioning Allah, the Exalted, are prone to adopting a spiritual hard heart. The one who possesses a hard spiritual heart is furthest from Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2411.

As mentioned earlier those who abandon the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, will be cursed with a hard heart. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 13:

*“So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who laughs excessively will become hard hearted. It is important to understand this does not mean one cannot smile as this has been classified as an act of charity by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1970. Laughing excessively causes one to adopt a mentality whereby they only discuss funny issues. This causes one to avoid serious issues such as death and Judgment Day. If one avoids these important issues how can they prepare for them? A lack of preparation will lead to one's spiritual heart becoming hard.

Some say over eating can cause hardness of the spiritual heart. This is because over eating causes one to become lazy. Laziness leads to a reduction in good deeds which can cause the spiritual heart to become hard.

As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334, when a person sins a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. If the number of sins increases then this blackness increases which leads to a hard spiritual heart. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

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

This is why it has been said persistently sinning can cause the spiritual heart to die.

It is important for muslims to strive to soften their heart as it leads to its purification. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, when the spiritual heart is purified all the limbs of the body become purified also. This purification will encourage one to perform righteous deeds and abandon sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

***“Those who believe say, “Why has a sūrah [chapter of the Holy Quran] not been sent down?” But when a precise sūrah is revealed and battle is mentioned therein, you see those in whose hearts is disease looking at you with a look of one overcome by death...”***

Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, desired to defend themselves from the constant persecution of the non-muslims of Mecca but they were initially commanded not to fight and instead remain patient. When fighting was decreed those who possessed weak faith and the hypocrites became adverse to it.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one’s spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“Those who believe say, “Why has a sūrah [chapter of the Holy Quran] not been sent down?” But when a precise sūrah is revealed and battle is mentioned therein, you see those in whose hearts is disease looking at you with a look of one overcome by death...”***

Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, desired to defend themselves from the constant persecution of the non-muslims of Mecca but they were initially commanded not to fight and instead remain patient. When fighting was decreed those who possessed weak faith and the hypocrites became adverse to it.

It is important for muslims to recognize why their worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. 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.”*

As they obey Allah, the Exalted, in order to receive worldly blessings the moment they fail to receive them or encounter a difficulty they often become angered which turns them away from the obedience of Allah,

the Exalted. These people often obey and disobey Allah, the Exalted, according to the situation they are facing which in reality contradicts true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though, desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, is acceptable in Islam yet, if one persists with this attitude they may become like those mentioned in this verse. It is far better to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to be saved in the hereafter and obtain Paradise. This person is unlikely to alter their behaviour when encountering difficulties. But the highest and best reason is to obey Allah, the Exalted, simply because He is their Lord and the Lord of the universe. This muslim, if sincere, will remain steadfast in all situations and through this obedience they will be granted both worldly and religious blessings which outstrip the worldly blessings the first type of person would ever receive.

To conclude, it is important for muslims to reflect on their intention and if necessary correct it so that it encourages them to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in all situations.

***“Those who believe say, “Why has a sūrah [chapter of the Holy Quran] not been sent down?” But when a precise sūrah is revealed and battle is mentioned therein, you see those in whose hearts is disease looking at you with a look of one overcome by death...”***

This verse can also be interpreted to mean that those who claimed to believe meaning, the hypocrites and the weak of faith, would demand permission to fight against the non-muslims in order to show off to others. But when the command was given their cowardice became manifest.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3257, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against asking too many questions as this led to the destruction of the past nations. Muslims should instead do what they have been commanded according to their capacity and refrain from what they have been prohibited from.

Muslims should not adopt this mentality as people who have a habit of asking too many questions often fail in fulfilling their duties and acquiring beneficial knowledge as they are too busy asking and researching about less important and sometimes irrelevant information. This mentality can inspire a person to argue and debate over these types of issues also. Unfortunately, this attitude is quite widespread amongst muslims today as they often argue about non obligatory and less important issues instead of concentrating on fulfilling their obligatory duties and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, correctly meaning, fulfilling them with their full etiquettes and conditions.

A muslim should instead research and query about topics which are relevant and important to understand for both worldly and religious matters otherwise they will follow in the footsteps of the people mentioned in this Hadith and only make their own lives more difficult.

***“Those who believe say, “Why has a sūrah [chapter of the Holy Quran] not been sent down?” But when a precise sūrah is revealed and battle is mentioned therein, you see those in whose hearts is disease looking at you with a look of one overcome by death. And more appropriate for them [would have been]. Obedience and good words. And when the matter [of fighting] was determined, if they had been true to Allah, it would have been better for them.”***

Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, desired to defend themselves from the constant persecution of the non-muslims of Mecca but they were initially commanded not to fight and instead remain patient. When fighting was decreed those who possessed weak faith and the hypocrites became adverse to it.

Generally speaking, muslims must remain steadfast against their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted,

has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant muslim will have no weapon to defend himself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“Those who believe say, “Why has a sūrah [chapter of the Holy Quran] not been sent down?” But when a precise sūrah is revealed and battle is mentioned therein, you see those in whose hearts is disease looking at you with a look of one overcome by death. And more appropriate for them [would have been]. Obedience and good words. And when the matter [of fighting] was determined, if they had been true to Allah, it would have been better for them.”***

Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, desired to defend themselves from the constant persecution of the non-muslims of Mecca but they were initially commanded not to fight and instead remain patient. When fighting was decreed those who possessed weak faith and the hypocrites became adverse to it.

The root of weakness of faith is ignorance.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu’ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“Those who believe say, “Why has a sūrah [chapter of the Holy Quran] not been sent down?” But when a precise sūrah is revealed and battle is mentioned therein, you see those in whose hearts is disease looking at you with a look of one overcome by death. And more appropriate for them [would have been]. Obedience and good words. And when the matter [of fighting] was determined, if they had been true to Allah, it would have been better for them.”***

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A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“Those who believe say, “Why has a sūrah [chapter of the Holy Quran] not been sent down?” But when a precise sūrah is revealed and battle is mentioned therein, you see those in whose hearts is disease looking at you with a look of one overcome by death. And more appropriate for them [would have been]. Obedience and good words. And when the matter [of fighting] was determined, if they had been true to Allah, it would have been better for them.”***

Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, desired to defend themselves from the constant persecution of the non-muslims of Mecca but they were initially commanded not to fight and instead remain patient. When fighting was decreed those who possessed weak faith and the hypocrites became adverse to it.

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 more appropriate for them [would have been]. Obedience and good words. And when the matter was determined, if they had been true to Allāh, it would have been better for them.”***

This is an aspect of being sincere.

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: Allah, the Exalted, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran and to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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 more appropriate for them [would have been]. Obedience and good words. And when the matter was determined, if they had been true to Allāh, it would have been better for them.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed the importance of truthfulness and avoiding lies. The first part advises that truthfulness leads to righteousness which in turn leads to Paradise. When a person persists on truthfulness they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a truthful person.

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cherry picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

***“...And more appropriate for them [would have been]. Obedience and good words. And when the matter was determined, if they had been true to Allāh, it would have been better for them.”***

It is important to understand that the prohibitions and commands of Allah, the Exalted, do not exist to make people's life harder. They only exist in order to benefit people in both this world and in the next even if these benefits are not apparent to people. For example, the negative effects of alcohol, which science has proven, was not always apparent such as its negative effect on the organs of the body. It only became unlawful in Islam to protect people from this and other harms. In addition, It is an aspect of faith to accept something without understanding its wisdoms. If all the wisdoms of the commands and prohibitions were made apparent then it would not allow muslims to possess complete faith. Allah, the Exalted, does not benefit from these commands and prohibitions only people do.

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verses 22-23

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتَقَطَّعُوا  
أَرْحَامَكُمْ ﴿٢٢﴾

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعَمَّى أَبْصَرَهُمْ ﴿٢٣﴾

*“So would you perhaps, if you turned away [from obedience], cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship?”*

*Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed, so He deafened them and blinded their vision.”*

***“So would you perhaps, if you turned away [from obedience], cause corruption on earth...Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”***

Sincere obedience leads to peace in both worlds.

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: Allah, the Exalted, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran and to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

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contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

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*"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:

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***“So would you perhaps, if you turned away [from obedience], cause corruption on earth...Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”***

When one fails to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, they will misuse the blessings they have been granted, such as authority. This will lead to corruption.

Corruption is when a person abuses the blessings they possess, especially their social influence, in order to gain worldly things, such as power and wealth. It affects a muslim’s duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and leads to much sins against people, such as oppression.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, warns that when the general public cheats each other financially Allah, the Exalted, punishes them by appointing oppressive leaders over them. One aspect of this oppression is corruption which causes the general public great distress. The same Hadith warns that when the general public break their covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then they will be overpowered by their enemies who will illegally confiscate their wealth and property from them. Again, this is an aspect of corruption where people of influence, such as government officials, freely take the belongings of others without any fear of the consequences. When the general public becomes corrupt then their leaders and other people in influential social positions are inspired to act in the same way believing this behaviour is accepted by the general public. This leads to corruption on a national level. But if the general public obeyed Allah, the Exalted, and avoided mistreating others through

corruption then their leaders and those in an influential social position would not dare act in a corrupt way full well knowing the general public would not stand for it. And according to the Hadith quoted earlier, if the general public remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, He would protect them from corrupt officials by appointing people into influential positions who are just in their affairs.

Instead of taking the immature path of blaming others for the widespread corruption observed in the world muslims should truly reflect on their own behaviour and if necessary adjust their attitude. Otherwise, corruption in society will only increase with the passing of time. No one should believe that as they are not in an influential social position they have no effect on the corruption which occurs in society. As proven by this discussion corruption occurs because of the negative behaviour of the general public and it therefore can only be removed by the good behaviour of the general public. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

*“...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...”*

***“So would you perhaps, if you turned away [from obedience], cause corruption on earth...Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”***

When one fails to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, they will misuse the blessings they have been granted, such as authority. This will lead to corruption.

Unfortunately, there are some who claim that faith is not required in this world and others who are Muslims claim it is enough to profess Islam without supporting it with sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. But the increase in crimes within society proves the importance of faith and strengthening it through knowledge and action. This is because crimes and sins only occur as a person feels they will either face no consequences for their actions, such as prison, or they will somehow escape them for example, by fleeing the country. But the person who believes that no matter what action they perform, whether open or secret, big or small, and no matter what tricks they attempt a day will undoubtedly come where they will be held accountable for all their deeds will always think twice before committing a crime or a sin. If this belief is strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge it will deter one from committing crimes and sins. If people acted in this way peace and justice would spread across society. The crime rate would decrease and the times would closely match the times of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his rightly guided Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them. This fact alone indicates the importance of faith and strengthening it through gaining and acting on knowledge within society. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 90:

*“Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving [help] to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.”*

***“So would you perhaps, if you turned away [from obedience], cause corruption on earth...Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”***

When one fails to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, they will misuse the blessings they have been granted, such as authority. This will lead to corruption.

One of the major reasons why society seems to be digressing is because people have abandoned acting justly. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6787, that previous nations were destroyed as the authorities would punish the weak when they broke the law but would pardon the rich and influential. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, being the head of state even declared in this Hadith that if his own daughter committed a crime he would enforce the full legal punishment on her. Even though members of the general public might not be in a position to advise their leaders to remain just in their actions but they can influence them indirectly by acting justly in all their dealings and actions. For example, a muslim must act justly in respect to their dependents, such as their children, by treating them equally. This has been specifically advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3544. They should act justly in all their business dealings irrespective of who they deal with. If people act with justice on an individual level then communities can change for the better and in turn those who are in influential positions, such as politicians, will act justly whether they desire to or not.

***“So would you perhaps, if you turned away [from obedience]...sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”***

When one fails to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, they will misuse the blessings they have been granted. This will prevent one from fulfilling the rights of others. If one fails to fulfil the rights of their relatives they will not fulfil the rights of non-relatives.

Upholding the ties of kinship is a vital aspect of Islam which cannot be abandoned if one desires success in both worlds. A true sign of one's faith is not spending all day worshipping Allah, the Exalted, in a Mosque but it is to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and to fulfill the rights of the creation. One of the most important rights of the creation is to uphold the ties of kinship. One can feign piety by dressing Islamically but they cannot deceive Allah, the Exalted. When one turns the pages of history they will always observe that the pious servants of Allah, the Exalted, maintained their ties of kinship. Even when their relative's mistreated them they still responded with kindness. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6525, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, will always aid the one who strives to maintain their ties of kinship even if their relatives make things difficult for them.

Replying good with good is not special whereas, replying good to evil is the sign of a sincere believer. The former behavior is even seen in animals. In most cases, when one treats an animal kindly it will in turn show affection back. It is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5991, that the one who truly upholds the bonds of kinship is the one who maintains ties even when their relatives sever them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was constantly terrorized by most of his relatives but he always showed kindness towards them.

It is commonly known that one cannot achieve success without the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. But in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5987, Allah, the Exalted, has clearly declared that He will sever bonds with the one who cuts their ties of kinship over worldly reasons. Bear in mind, this is true irrespective of how much one struggles to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship such as, the obligatory prayers. If Allah, the Exalted, cuts ties with a muslim how can they achieve His closeness and eternal success?

In addition, in most cases Allah, the Exalted, delays the punishment of sins in order to give people the opportunity to repent. But breaking the ties of kinship over worldly reasons is punished swiftly. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4212.

Unfortunately, severing ties is commonly seen in the world today. People easily sever ties of kinship over petty worldly reasons. They fail to recognize that any loss which occurs in the material world is temporary but if they are disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, they will face prolonged suffering in both worlds.

A reason for breaking the ties of kinship which is commonly seen within the Islamic community is when one reaches a higher social status through their occupation. This inspires them to discard their relatives as they believe they are not worthy of interacting with them anymore. Their love for their wealth and social status pushes them to the doors of paranoia which convinces them that their relatives only wish to take their wealth from them.

The Holy Quran indicates that these bonds will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 1:

*“...And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever over you, an Observer.”*

This verse also clearly indicates that one cannot obtain piety without upholding the ties of kinship. So those who believe they can achieve it

through excess worship and fasting are proven wrong and must therefore change their behaviour.

Islam teaches muslims to uphold all ties of kinship by aiding their relatives in matters which are good whenever and wherever possible. They have been ordered to adopt a constructive mindset which unites relatives for the benefit of society rather than a destructive mentality which only causes divisions within families. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, creating divisions amongst people leads to one's destruction.

Those who sever their ties of kinship have been cursed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verses 22-23:

*“So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”*

How can one achieve their lawful desires in this world or in the next when they are encompassed with the curse of Allah, the Exalted, and deprived of His mercy?

Islam does not order one to go beyond their means in supporting their relatives nor does it ask them to sacrifice the limits of Allah, the Exalted, for their relatives as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. Therefore, one should never join their relatives in acts of evil. In this case, a muslim should command their relatives to do good and gently forbid them from evil while maintaining respect for them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

Countless benefits are obtained by the one who maintains the ties of kinship for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who maintains ties will be blessed with extra grace in their provision and in their life. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1693. This means that their provision irrespective of how little it is will be enough for them and it will provide them with peace of mind and body. Grace in life means they will find time to fulfill all their religious and worldly duties. These are two blessings muslims spend their whole life and wealth trying to obtain but many fail to recognize that Allah, the Exalted, has placed both of them in maintaining ties of kinship.

Maintaining ties of kinship is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered muslims to fulfill

this vital duty even with their non-muslim relatives. A Hadith advising this is found in Sahih Muslim, number 2324.

One of the traps of the Devil is that he aims to create dissension between relatives and within society which leads to broken families and social divisions. His ultimate goal is to weaken Islam as a nation. Unfortunately, some have become infamous for harboring grudges which go on for decades and pass on from generation to generation. A person will treat a relative well for decades but over one mistake and argument the latter will vow never to speak to them again. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6526, that it is unlawful for a muslim to cut off ties from another muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. If this is the command regarding severing ties with a non-relative can one imagine the seriousness of severing ties with relatives? This question has been answered in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that the one who severs ties with a relative over worldly reasons will not enter Paradise.

One must reflect on the verses and Hadiths which discuss this important topic and realize that if after decades of sins Allah, the Exalted, does not close His doors or sever links with people why do people so easily turn their backs on their relatives over small worldly issues? This must change if one desires for their connection to Allah, the Exalted, to remain intact.

***“So would you perhaps, if you turned away [from obedience]...sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”***

When one fails to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, they will misuse the blessings they have been granted. This will prevent one from fulfilling the rights of others. If one fails to fulfil the rights of their relatives they will not fulfil the rights of non-relatives.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the bankrupt muslim is the one who accumulates many righteous deeds, such as fasting and prayer, but as they mistreated people their good deeds will be given to their victims and if necessary their victim's sins will be given to them on Judgement Day. This will lead to them being hurled into Hell.

It is important to understand that a muslim must fulfil two aspects of faith in order to achieve success. The first are the duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer. The second aspect is in respect to people which includes treating them kindly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true believer until they keep they physical and verbal harm away from the life and possessions of others.

It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, is infinitely forgiving meaning, He will forgive those who sincerely repent to Him. But He will not forgive the sins which involve other people until the victim forgives first. As people are not so forgiving a muslim should be fearful that those who they have wronged will exact revenge on them by taking away their precious good deeds on Judgment Day. Even if a muslim fulfils the rights of Allah, the Exalted, they may still end up in Hell simply because they have wronged others. It is therefore important for muslims to strive to fulfil both aspects of their duties in order to obtain success in both worlds.

***“So would you perhaps, if you turned away [from obedience] cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”***

One must avoid this outcome by adopting true belief through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others.

Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“So would you perhaps, if you turned away [from obedience] cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”***

Turned away can also be interpreted to mean granted authority.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact,

this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true muslim.

If a muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

***“Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”***

Cursing is when one supplicates for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, to be removed from something or someone else. Only Allah, the Exalted, is aware of who deserves to be cursed and deprived of His mercy. Therefore, one should avoid this foolish habit. Cursing someone who does not deserve it is a foul act and the one who desires the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, to be removed from someone else may find that it is removed from them instead. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2019, that a true believer does not curse. The muslims who have the habit of cursing are so disliked by Allah, the Exalted, that they will be deprived of being witnesses and intercessors on the Day of Judgment. Allah, the Exalted, will dislike showing them off to the rest of creation on the Last Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6610.

Finally, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6652, highlights the severity of cursing a believer. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that cursing a believer is like killing them.

Even if one deserves to be cursed it is safer and wiser to abstain and instead utter words which will please Allah, the Exalted, such as His remembrance.

***“So would you perhaps, if you turned away [from obedience]...so  
He deafened them...”***

When one turns away from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, they will not use their blessings, such as their senses, correctly. This will lead to them being sealed.

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier yet the strength of muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge namely, they believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

***“So would you perhaps, if you turned away [from obedience]...so  
He deafened them...”***

When one turns away from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, they will not use their blessings, such as their senses, correctly. This will lead to them being sealed.

Listening correctly to the word of Allah, the Exalted, is the only way one can correctly adhere to its teachings. It is important to understand the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is simply acknowledging a sound with one's mind even if they fail to make sense of the noise. For example, a person may hear someone shouting at them from a great distance but they will not be able to understand what they are saying. Whereas, listening involves hearing a sound and understanding it so that one's behaviour changes. For example, a person giving a specific verbal instruction to another who responds appropriately after hearing and understanding the instructions.

Muslims need to hear the word of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to understand it so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way. Unfortunately, many Muslims have failed to live up to this in respect to the Holy Quran as they are good at hearing the recitation of the Holy Quran but fail to correctly listen to it which involves understanding and acting on its teachings.

To conclude, simply hearing the word of Allah, the Exalted, is not good enough to obtain success one must strive to instead truly listen to it.

***“So would you perhaps, if you turned away [from obedience]...so  
He...blinded their vision.”***

When one turns away from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, they will not use their blessings, such as their senses, correctly. This will lead to them being sealed.

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*“...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.”*”

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“So would you perhaps, if you turned away [from obedience]...so He...blinded their vision.”***

When one turns away from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, they will not use their blessings, such as their senses, correctly. This will lead to them being sealed.

It is important for a muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

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

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced

approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden message a muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

***“So would you perhaps, if you turned away [from obedience]...so He...blinded their vision.”***

When one turns away from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, they will not use their blessings, such as their senses, correctly. This will lead to them being sealed.

It is important for Muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to them.

They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“So would you perhaps, if you turned away [from obedience] cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allāh has cursed, so He deafened them and blinded their vision.”***

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between

good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verse 24

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا ﴿٢٤﴾

*“Then do they not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?”*

***“Then do they not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?”***

Reflecting on the Holy Quran is an aspect of fulfilling its rights.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete

loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“Then do they not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?”***

When one understands and acts on the Holy Quran they will recognize its divine origins.

The Holy Quran possesses an uncountable amount of qualities which separates it from any other worldly book. This aspect of the Holy Quran is so intense that it cannot even be explained or discussed over countless lifetimes. But a few of these qualities will be mentioned here. First of all, in the Holy Quran, Allah, the Exalted, has given an open challenge to the entire universe (not just people) and not only a challenge to those who were present when this divine revelation was revealed but to all of creation till the end of time. The challenge being if the people believed the Holy Quran was not a divine revelation from Allah, the Exalted, then they should produce a chapter that can rival a chapter of the Holy Quran. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 23:

*“And if you are in some doubt, concerning what We sent down upon Our special devotee, then bring one chapter like it, and call upon all your helpers beside Allah, if you are truthful.”*

There is no book on the entire planet that can and has given this type of open challenge. But over 1400 years ago the Holy Quran gave this

challenge to the entire universe and to this day this challenge has not been won by the non-Muslims nor will it ever be God willing.

Another quality of the Holy Quran is that it stated the outcome of future events. But the more amazing thing about these statements is that the outcomes seemed impossible at the time. For example chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 28:

*“It is He Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth that he may make it prevail over all other religions And Sufficient is Allah as witness.”*

When this verse was revealed the entire city of Mecca was Islam so when the people of Mecca heard this verse, unfortunately for them, they believed that Islam was too feeble and would therefore not survive long and certainly would not spread beyond the borders of Mecca let alone the entire world. But within a some years Allah, the Exalted, fulfilled this promise.

Another example of how the Holy Quran prophesied a future event which was unimaginable at the time is found in chapter 30 Ar Rum, verses 2-5:

*“The Romans have been subdued. In the nearby land and after their subjugation they will soon overcome. In a few years. The command is of Allah only before and after. And on that day the believers shall rejoice. With the help of Allah, He helps whom He pleases. And He is the Might, and Merciful.”*

These verses of the Holy Quran were revealed during a time where the Romans (Christians) were at war with the Persians (Fire worshippers). This war has been confirmed by many authentic historic books. At this particular time the Persians were on the verge of winning the war. At one point Rome itself was surrounded by the Persians. But Allah, the Exalted, stated that the Romans would eventually reign victorious. The non-Muslims of Mecca who themselves were idol worshippers favoured the Persians and agreed with the majority that it was impossible for the Romans to win. But Allah, the Exalted, as always proved these verses true and allowed the Romans victory.

A final example which appeals to the scientists of the world is seen in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 33:

*“And it is He Who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon. Each one is floating in a circumference.”*

For centuries scientists have fought over theories on how exactly the solar system is arranged e.g. whether the sun remains still and the Earth rotates around or vice versa. Only relatively recently it has been proven by scientists from all different faiths and backgrounds that each object; sun, moon and the Earth all rotate on their own axes and rotate around each other in a set orbit. But Allah, the Exalted, declared this over 1400 years ago. All the science related verses of the Holy Quran are slowly being proven by scientists today. This is a huge piece of evidence that proves that the Holy Quran are the words of the One and only true God, Allah, the Exalted, who has created this universe and everything in it, because only a Creator can truly explain his creations.

Even though many commands of the Holy Quran may not be understood by people does not mean they are incorrect. Certain verses of the Holy Quran whose wisdom was hidden to man became apparent when society reached a certain level of development. As the whole Holy Quran is a book of wisdom and guidance it must be accepted irrespective if one understands its commands or not. This situation is just like a child who is suffering from a cold and desires ice cream but is not given it by their parent. The child will continue to cry without understanding the wisdom behind but those that possess knowledge will agree with the parent even though outwardly it appears as if the decision of the parent is wronging the child.

When studying the Holy Quran one will realize that it contains different levels of superiority through both obvious and subtle meanings that it discusses. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 1:

*“...[This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise and Aware.”*

The expressions in it are unparalleled and its meanings are explained in a simple straight forward way. Its verses are extremely eloquent and no other text can surpass it. The Holy Quran also mentioned the stories of the previous nations in detail even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not educated in history. It commanded every type of good and forbade every type of evil, those that affect an individual and those that affect an entire society so that peace and security can spread throughout homes and society. The Holy Quran is free from exaggerations, lies or falsehood unlike poems and stories. All the verses, whether short or long, in the Holy Quran are beneficial. Even when the same story is repeated in the Holy Quran different important lessons can be learned from it. Unlike all other books the Holy Quran does not become boring when it is repeatedly recited and a seeker of truth never gets fed up of studying it. The Holy Quran not only provides warnings and promises but supports them with unshakeable and clear proofs. When the Holy Quran discusses anything which can seem abstract, such as adopting patience, it always provides an easy and practical way of implementing it. It encourages one to fulfil the purpose of their creation and prepare for the eternal hereafter in a simple yet profound way. It makes the straight path clear and appealing to the one who desires true success in both worlds. The knowledge within it is timeless and can be applied to every society and age. It is a healing for every emotional, economical and physical difficulty when it is understood and applied correctly. It is the cure for every problem an individual or an entire society can ever encounter. One only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the societies which implemented the teachings of the Holy Quran correctly in order to understand its all encompassing benefits. Centuries have passed yet not even a single letter

has been edited in the Holy Quran as Allah, the Exalted, promised to safeguard it. No other book in history possesses this quality. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 9:

*“Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [i.e., the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian.”*

This is undoubtedly the greatest and timeless miracle of Allah, the Exalted, granted to His final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But the only one who will benefit from it is the one who seeks the truth whereas the seekers of their desires will only find it difficult to hear and follow. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

***“Then do they not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?”***

When one understands and acts on the Holy Quran they will obtain certainty of faith. Ignorance prevents one from achieving this.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“Then do they not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?”***

When one understands and acts on the Holy Quran they will obtain certainty of faith.

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“Then do they not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?”***

When one understands and acts on the Holy Quran they will obtain certainty of faith. A corrupt spiritual heart can prevent this from occurring.

The corruption and hardness of the spiritual heart is an extremely important matter which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and, blessings be upon him, warned that when the spiritual heart becomes corrupt then the whole body becomes corrupt. This corruption is then reflected in one’s speech and actions. Similarly, the Holy Quran has highlighted the importance of a soft and sound heart by advising that one will not derive benefit from their possessions or relatives on Judgment Day unless they possess a sound spiritual heart. Chapter 26 Ash Shu’ara, verses 88-89:

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

The one with a hard spiritual heart can be described as a person who rejects the truth when it is presented to them believing they are superior in knowledge. They lack submission and the fear of Allah, the Exalted, which leads to abandoning good deeds, committing sins, excessive love and striving for the material world while remaining heedless to preparing for the

eternal hereafter. The hard hearted are easily influenced by the Devil into committing sins and rejecting good deeds. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 53:

*“[That is] so He may make what Satan throws in [i.e., asserts] a trial for those within whose hearts is disease and those hard of heart...”*

Two specific blameworthy characteristics are adopted by the one who possesses a hard spiritual heart. They intentionally misinterpret divine scriptures in order to fulfil their own desires such as obtaining fame. They criticise those who strive to adhere to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they desire people to follow their thinking and love for the material world. The second is that they cherry pick verses and Hadiths which suit their desires. They label those who strive to adopt and act on all verses and Hadiths as extremists thereby making their own attitude seem pleasing to others. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 13:

*“So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened. They distort words from their [proper] places [i.e., usages] and have forgotten a portion of that of which they were reminded. And you will still observe deceit among them, except a few of them...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned that those who talk excessively without mentioning Allah, the

Exalted, are prone to adopting a spiritual hard heart. The one who possesses a hard spiritual heart is furthest from Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2411.

As mentioned earlier those who abandon the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, will be cursed with a hard heart. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 13:

*“So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who laughs excessively will become hard hearted. It is important to understand this does not mean one cannot smile as this has been classified as an act of charity by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1970. Laughing excessively causes one to adopt a mentality whereby they only discuss funny issues. This causes one to avoid serious issues such as death and Judgment Day. If one avoids these important issues how can they prepare for them? A lack of preparation will lead to one's spiritual heart becoming hard.

Some say over eating can cause hardness of the spiritual heart. This is because over eating causes one to become lazy. Laziness leads to a reduction in good deeds which can cause the spiritual heart to become hard.

As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334, when a person sins a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. If the number of sins increases then this blackness increases which leads to a hard spiritual heart. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

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

This is why it has been said persistently sinning can cause the spiritual heart to die.

It is important for muslims to strive to soften their heart as it leads to its purification. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, when the spiritual heart is purified all the limbs of the body become purified also. This purification will encourage one to perform righteous deeds and abandon sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

***“Then do they not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?”***

When one understands and acts on the Holy Quran they will obtain certainty of faith. A corrupt spiritual heart can prevent this from occurring.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they

will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“Then do they not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?”***

When one understands and acts on the Holy Quran they will obtain certainty of faith. Preferring one's desires over the truth can act as a barrier from benefiting from the Holy Quran.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who

became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“Then do they not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?”***

When one understands and acts on the Holy Quran they will obtain certainty of faith. Preferring one's desires over the truth can act as a barrier from benefiting from the Holy Quran.

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that

they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“Then do they not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?”***

When one understands and acts on the Holy Quran they will obtain certainty of faith. Preferring one's desires over the truth can act as a barrier from benefiting from the Holy Quran.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and

incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verses 25-28

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ارْتَدُّوا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِم مِّن بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّ لَهُم  
الْهُدَىٰ ۗ الشَّيْطَانُ سَوَّلَ لَهُمْ وَأَمَلَىٰ لَهُمْ ﴿٢٥﴾

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ كَرِهُوا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ  
سَنُطِيعُكُمْ فِي بَعْضِ الْأُمْرِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِسْرَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٦﴾

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا تَوَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ  
وَأَدْبَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٧﴾

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ اتَّبَعُوا مَا آسَخَطَ اللَّهُ وَكَرِهُوا  
رِضْوَانَهُ ۗ فَأَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٢٨﴾

*“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them and prolonged hope for them.*

*That is because they said to those who disliked what Allah sent down, "We will obey you in part of the matter." And Allah knows what they conceal.*

*Then how [will it be] when the angels take them in death, striking their faces and their backs?*

*That is because they followed what angered Allah and disliked [what earns] His pleasure, so He rendered worthless their deeds."*

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them...”***

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

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A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

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become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them...”***

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them...”***

This verse is connected to chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 38:

*“...And Satan had made pleasing to them their deeds and averted them from the path...”*

As mentioned in this verse the Devil fools people into committing sins and making wrong decisions by beautifying the incorrect choice for them. This occurs in situations when a person must make a choice between two or more options. It also occurs when the choice is between the lawful and unlawful and even between two lawful options. If the Devil cannot guide someone to a sin then he attempts to guide them to the inferior option, even if it is lawful, hoping it will lead to some sort of a sin, such as a person complaining about life and destiny. The Devil beautifies a choice by causing one to focus on its apparent benefit to such a degree that they lose focus on the bigger picture and the consequences of the choice. An adult then behaves like a child who makes choices without reflecting over the consequences of their actions. This is one of the main reasons why people commit sins. In reality, if one truly reflected on the punishment of sins they would never commit them.

Something which helps in situations like this is to mentally take a step back and assess the options by comparing their long-term benefits and harms. Only when the lawful benefits of something outweighs the harm should a person proceed. The other thing which helps is to deeply reflect on the consequences of the potential options. Some choices might be lawful but if one goes ahead with them it may make their life difficult in the long run. For example, sometimes people rush into marriage with someone they apparently love. They base their decision solely on their feelings instead of reflecting on other more important aspects, for example, if their potential future spouse will make a good life partner or a good parent and if they will help them in their obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Many marriages have ended in divorce because the couple did not reflect on the long term implications of a potential marriage. Many people often claim their spouse was very different before they got married but in most cases they have not changed at all. The truth is that before marriage they did not spend so much time with them so they did not observe certain characteristics which became obvious after marriage.

Some often rush into action and later have regrets as their choice caused them more trouble and in many cases the issue was not a big deal in the first place. This type of action can only be avoided when one reflects on the situation and observes the bigger picture meaning, the wider and long-term implications and consequences of taking a step forward.

One should not only assess if something is lawful or unlawful before making a decision. Even though, this is the most important thing to consider yet, it is not the only thing. As many lawful incorrect choices, which are beautified by the Devil, can lead to trouble further on in life.

To sum up, before making any choice a person must take a step back and reflect deeply over its lawfulness and its potential long-term benefits and harms under the guidance of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever acts like this will rarely make a wrong choice they later regret.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them...”***

It is important to understand that no matter how much religious knowledge one obtains or how much worship and righteous deeds they perform they will never be safe from the attacks and traps of the Devil. This is because the Devil attacks each person according to how much knowledge they possess and how much righteous deeds they perform. For example, he will try to convince the muslim who is strict in offering their obligatory prayers not to offer them in congregation at the Mosque or by convincing them to delay their obligatory prayers beyond their starting times as he knows he will not be able to convince them to completely abandon the obligatory prayers. Whereas, in respect to the muslim who is struggling to establish their obligatory prayers he will attempt to convince them that they are too difficult to establish therefore they should only offer them when they are completely free. He tries to convince those who perform many voluntary righteous deeds not to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to improve their character so that they continue to destroy their good deeds through bad characteristics such as, lying and backing.

The Devil aims to prevent a person from a reaching a higher level if he cannot convince them to fall in rank through disobedience to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, muslims should always be on guard against his attacks and traps by persistently striving to increase in rank, improve their character and avoid acts of disobedience which is all achieved by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them...”***

The Devil tries to convince muslims to always observe those who are worse than them in behaviour in order to justify their lack of striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and improving their character and behaviour for the better. For example, a muslim who offers their obligatory prayers once in a while will observe someone who does not pray at all in order to make themselves feel better. A thief will look at a murderer and convince themselves stealing is not so bad. The examples are endless. It is very strange how these muslims so easily observe those who appear worse than them in order to justify their lack of effort in obeying Allah, the Exalted, but these same people will not observe those who are in a worse off position than them when they face difficulties. For example, the person who suffers from back pain will not observe the one who is physically disabled so that it prevents them from complaining. This attitude has specifically been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513.

In addition, if observing those who appear worse in their behaviour does not save one from punishment in a worldly court, such as a thief being pardoned by a judge because there are many murderers in the world, how can one imagine this excuse will hold up in the court of Allah, the Exalted?

Muslims should therefore avoid this trap of the Devil by observing those who appear better than them so that they are inspired to improve their character and behaviour progressively for the pleasure of Allah, the

Exalted. This is what Allah, the Exalted, demands meaning, He does not demand perfection.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them...”***

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3294, advises that whichever path the second rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, took the Devil would take a different path, meaning, out of fear of him. One of the reasons why the Devil acted in this way was because he had little influence over Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him. The Devil cannot physically force someone to commit sins. He instead encourages them to do so through whisperings. But in order for them to be effective he requires a person to possess some sort of worldly desire. Then through his whisperings he encourages the growth of this worldly desire until it drives the person to act on it thereby committing a sin. The reason the Devil had little effect on Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, was because he had removed worldly desires from his heart. His only desires were connected to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, if muslims desire to minimise the effect the Devil has on them they should remove unnecessary desires from their heart. This only occurs when one refrains from indulging in the excess and unnecessary aspects of this material world. The more they do this the more these worldly desires will leave their heart until they reach a point where they only desire to please Allah, the Exalted, in all their actions. The Devil will flee from this person as he knows he will have little effect on them. But the more one indulges in the unnecessary aspects of this material world the more worldly desires they will possess and therefore, the more influence the Devil will have over them.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them and prolonged hope [for a long life] for them.”***

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number

6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

*“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.” But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”*

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them and prolonged hope [for a long life] for them.”***

Having hopes for a long life prevents one from preparing for their death.

Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The only way to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them and prolonged hope [for a long life] for them.”***

Having hopes for a long life prevents one from preparing for their death.

It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of the material world. Unfortunately, muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared.

It is important for muslims to understand that no matter how long they live life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A muslim only fails preparing for the hereafter correctly because of their pursuit of the excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities.

A muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them and prolonged hope [for a long life] for them.”***

Having hopes for a long life prevents one from preparing for their death.

When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing. Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim they stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that they stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, muslims do not treat it like one. Instead,

they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them and prolonged hope [for a long life] for them.”***

Having hopes for a long life prevents one from preparing for their death.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that there are two blessings people often do not appreciate until they lose them namely, good health and free time.

Everything in this material can be bought, even through illegal means, except time. Once it passes it does not return. Even though this reality is not denied by anyone irrespective of their faith yet, many muslims do not appreciate and make good use of the time they have been given. Many have adopted the mentality that they will prepare for the hereafter tomorrow. But as each day passes this tomorrow keeps getting delayed until, in many cases, this tomorrow never comes. And they only realise this tomorrow when it is too late meaning, at the time of their death. Those who are fortunate enough to reach this tomorrow during their lives may inhabit the Mosques when they reach elderly age but as they have dedicated so much time and energy to the material world their bodies might be in Mosques yet, their hearts and tongues are still engrossed in the material world. This is obvious to those who regularly attend Mosques. These muslims are unlikely to learn and act on Islamic teachings because of their elderly age and their worldly mentalities.

In addition, with the passing of time, in most cases, one's responsibilities only increase such as marriage and raising children. So delaying preparing for the hereafter until one is supposedly more free is simply foolish. Islam does not teach muslims to abandon the world but it does encourage them to make correct use of their time by taking enough from the material world in order to fulfil their necessitates and responsibilities without extravagance or waste and then dedicate the rest of their efforts to preparing for the permanent hereafter. This is how one uses their time correctly. How many muslims can honestly say they dedicate the majority of their efforts to preparing for the hereafter over beautifying their temporal world?

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them and prolonged hope [for a long life] for them.”***

Having hopes for a long life prevents one from preparing for their death and the Day of Judgement. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them and prolonged hope [for a long life] for them.”***

Having hopes for a long life prevents one from preparing for their death and the Day of Judgement. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them and filled them with false hopes.”***

In order to avoid this trap of the Devil one must understand the difference between hope in Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey 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

whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

A specific type of wishful thinking which affected the past nations and even the muslim nation is when a person believes that they can ignore the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, and somehow someone on the Day of Judgement will intercede for them and save them from Hell. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact and has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less even with his intercession some muslims whose punishment will be reduced by it will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil convinces those who do not believe in Judgement Day that even if it occurs they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on that day by claiming that they were not so bad as they avoided major crimes such as murder. They have convinced themselves that their pleas will be accepted and they will be sent to Paradise even though they disbelieved in Allah, the

Exalted, during their lives on Earth. This is incredibly foolish as Allah, the Exalted, will not treat the person who believed in Him and tried to obey him like the one who disbelieved in Him. A single verse has erased this type of wishful thinking. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

*“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”*

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them and filled them with false hopes.”***

In order to avoid this trap of the Devil one must understand the difference between hope in Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking.

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a muslim is in danger of dying as a non-muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory

duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

*“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”*

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them and filled them with false hopes.”***

In order to avoid this trap of the Devil one must understand the difference between hope in Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and

incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them...That is because they said to those who disliked what Allāh sent down, "We will obey you in part of the matter." And Allāh knows what they conceal.”***

The hypocrites and those weak in faith made an agreement with the people of the Book living in Medina and the non-muslims of Mecca.

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them...That is because they said to those who disliked what Allāh sent down, "We will obey you in part of the matter."..."”***

The hypocrites and those weak in faith made an agreement with the people of the Book living in Medina and the non-muslims of Mecca.

These verses also warn against bad 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.”*

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them...That is because they said to those who disliked what Allāh sent down, "We will obey you in part of the matter." And Allāh knows what they conceal.”***

The hypocrites and those weak in faith made an agreement with the people of the Book living in Medina and the non-muslims of Mecca.

These verses are connected to chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

*“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”*

In this verse Allah, the exalted, explains how people should conduct themselves when conversing with others so that they derive benefit for themselves and others. The first is that when muslims gather they should discuss how to benefit others which encompasses charity in the form of wealth and physical aid. If a muslim is not in a position to help a needy person then this is an excellent way of gaining reward equal to actually helping them. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6800, advises that the one who inspires someone else towards good will be rewarded as if they performed the good action themselves. If one cannot aid someone in

difficulty or inspire another to fulfill this task they can at least encourage others to supplicate for the one in need. Supplication for an absent person causes the Angels to pray for the supplicator. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534. This mentality can inspire the group to visit the needy person which provides them with emotional support. This has a powerful psychological impact and provides them with a new mode of strength when dealing with their hardship. The important thing to note is that when one mentions the situation of a needy person their intention must be to aid them in their hour of need. It should never be for the sake of passing time and making them a target of ridicule.

The second way to gain blessings is when one converses about anything lawful that will provide benefit to someone in this world or the next. This aspect includes advising others to do good and refrain from evil in every aspect of their life.

The third aspect mentioned in this verse involves conversing with others with a constructive mindset which brings people together in a positive way instead of possessing a destructive mindset which causes divisions within society. If a person cannot bring people together in a loving way then the minimum they can do is not cause divisions amongst them. Even this is recorded as a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2518.

In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, advises that reconciling between two opposing muslims for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is superior to voluntary prayer and fasting. Every good thing found

within society was the outcome of this pious attitude such as the construction of schools, hospitals and Mosques.

But it is important to note, that a muslim will only obtain the great reward mentioned in this verse when they perform the righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Each person will be rewarded based on their intention not just their physical action. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The insincere muslim will find that on Judgment Day they will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them...That is because they said to those who disliked what Allāh sent down, "We will obey you in part of the matter." And Allāh knows what they conceal.”***

The hypocrites and those weak in faith made an agreement with the people of the Book living in Medina and the non-muslims of Mecca.

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This

is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them...That is because they said to those who disliked what Allāh sent down, "We will obey you in part of the matter." And Allāh knows what they conceal. Then how [will it be] when the angels take them in death, striking their faces and their backs? That is because they followed what angered Allāh and disliked [what earns] His pleasure, so He rendered worthless their deeds.”***

The hypocrites and those weak in faith made an agreement with the people of the Book living in Medina and the non-muslims of Mecca.

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they

abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them...That is because they said to those who disliked what Allāh sent down, "We will obey you in part of the matter." And Allāh knows what they conceal. Then how [will it be] when the angels take them in death, striking their faces and their backs? That is because they followed what angered Allāh and disliked [what earns] His pleasure, so He rendered worthless their deeds.”***

The hypocrites and those weak in faith made an agreement with the people of the Book living in Medina and the non-muslims of Mecca.

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only

encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them...That is because they said to those who disliked what Allāh sent down, "We will obey you in part of the matter."...That is because they followed what angered Allāh and disliked [what earns] His pleasure, so He rendered worthless their deeds.”***

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.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them...That is because they said to those who disliked what Allāh sent down, "We will obey you in part of the matter."...That is because they followed what angered Allāh and disliked [what earns] His pleasure, so He rendered worthless their deeds.”***

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.

***“Indeed, those who reverted back [to disobedience] after guidance had become clear to them - Satan enticed them and prolonged hope for them. That is because they said to those who disliked what Allah sent down, "We will obey you in part of the matter." And Allah knows what they conceal. Then how [will it be] when the angels take them in death, striking their faces and their backs? That is because they followed what angered Allah and disliked [what earns] His pleasure, so He rendered worthless their deeds.”***

These verses could also be referring to the people of the Book who recognised the truthfulness of Islam yet conspired against it with the other non-muslims.

The scholars from the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) living in Medina were fully aware of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they had been described in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

*“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons...”*

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

*“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons...”*

It is important to note, that all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, came with the same religion, Islam – submission to Allah, the Exalted. The only thing they differed in were smaller issues but their core and fundamental teachings were one in the same. As the Holy Quran was in harmony with the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures there was no good reason why the people of the book should have rejected the Holy Quran and the one to whom it was given namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, it was more appropriate for them to accept Islam as the scholars of the people of the book possessed knowledge which allowed them to recognize the truth easily.

In addition, the fact that the Holy Quran confirmed the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures meant that when one rejected the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they were in essence rejecting their previous divine scriptures and their Holy Prophets, such as the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon them, also.

After all these signs verifying the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, many of the scholars of the people of the book still concealed and misinterpreted their divine teachings

out of envy and fear of losing the social status and wealth they had obtained as leaders of their societies.

For example, in the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This Christian delegation did not accept Islam but agreed to a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the delegation left Medina two brothers, Abu Haritha and Kurz Bin Alqama, were riding near each other. The mule of Abu Haritha stumbled and Kurz in frustration rebuked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indirectly. Abu Haritha in response rebuked him. When Kurz asked about his response Abu Haritha told him that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was undoubtedly the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, they had been waiting for and who had been described in their divine scriptures. When Kurz asked him why he rejected Islam even though he knew it was the truth Abu Haritha replied that he did so because of the honor, wealth and authority their people had given them and he was afraid he would lose it all if he accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 75-76.

It is therefore vital for Muslims to avoid the excess love for wealth and social status. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a Muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a Muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true Muslim.

If a Muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated Muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This Muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person

who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verses 29-30

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ أَنْ لَنْ يُخْرِجَ اللَّهُ  
أَصْغَانَهُمْ ﴿٢٩﴾

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَأَرَيْنَاكُمْ فَلَعَرَفْتَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ وَلَتَعَرَفْتَهُمْ فِي  
لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ أَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٠﴾

*“Or do those in whose hearts is disease think that Allah would never  
expose their [feelings of] hatred?”*

*And if We willed, We could show them to you, and you would know them by  
their mark; but you will surely know them by the tone of [their] speech. And  
Allah knows your deeds.”*

***“Or do those in whose hearts is disease think that Allah would never expose their [feelings of] hatred?...And Allāh knows your deeds.”***

This referred to the hypocrites and those who possessed weak faith and their negative feelings towards Islam.

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“Or do those in whose hearts is disease think that Allah would never expose their [feelings of] hatred?”***

This referred to the hypocrites and those who possessed weak faith and their negative feelings towards Islam. Failing to learn and act on the teachings of Islam will prevent one from purifying their character from negative characteristics.

The corruption and hardness of the spiritual heart is an extremely important matter which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and, blessings be upon him, warned that when the spiritual heart becomes corrupt then the whole body becomes corrupt. This corruption is then reflected in one’s speech and actions. Similarly, the Holy Quran has highlighted the importance of a soft and sound heart by advising that one will not derive benefit from their possessions or relatives on Judgment Day unless they possess a sound spiritual heart. Chapter 26 Ash Shu’ara, verses 88-89:

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

The one with a hard spiritual heart can be described as a person who rejects the truth when it is presented to them believing they are superior in knowledge. They lack submission and the fear of Allah, the Exalted, which

leads to abandoning good deeds, committing sins, excessive love and striving for the material world while remaining heedless to preparing for the eternal hereafter. The hard hearted are easily influenced by the Devil into committing sins and rejecting good deeds. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 53:

*“[That is] so He may make what Satan throws in [i.e., asserts] a trial for those within whose hearts is disease and those hard of heart...”*

Two specific blameworthy characteristics are adopted by the one who possesses a hard spiritual heart. They intentionally misinterpret divine scriptures in order to fulfil their own desires such as obtaining fame. They criticise those who strive to adhere to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they desire people to follow their thinking and love for the material world. The second is that they cherry pick verses and Hadiths which suit their desires. They label those who strive to adopt and act on all verses and Hadiths as extremists thereby making their own attitude seem pleasing to others. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 13:

*“So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened. They distort words from their [proper] places [i.e., usages] and have forgotten a portion of that of which they were reminded. And you will still observe deceit among them, except a few of them...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned that those who talk excessively without mentioning Allah, the Exalted, are prone to adopting a spiritual hard heart. The one who possesses a hard spiritual heart is furthest from Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2411.

As mentioned earlier those who abandon the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, will be cursed with a hard heart. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 13:

*“So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who laughs excessively will become hard hearted. It is important to understand this does not mean one cannot smile as this has been classified as an act of charity by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1970. Laughing excessively causes one to adopt a mentality whereby they only discuss funny issues. This causes one to avoid serious issues such as death and Judgment Day. If one avoids these important issues how can they prepare for them? A lack of preparation will lead to one's spiritual heart becoming hard.

Some say over eating can cause hardness of the spiritual heart. This is because over eating causes one to become lazy. Laziness leads to a reduction in good deeds which can cause the spiritual heart to become hard.

As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334, when a person sins a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. If the number of sins increases then this blackness increases which leads to a hard spiritual heart. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

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

This is why it has been said persistently sinning can cause the spiritual heart to die.

It is important for muslims to strive to soften their heart as it leads to its purification. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, when the spiritual heart is purified all the limbs of the body become purified also. This purification will encourage one to perform righteous deeds and abandon sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

***“Or do those in whose hearts is disease think that Allah would never expose their [feelings of] hatred?”***

This referred to the hypocrites and those who possessed weak faith and their negative feelings towards Islam. Failing to learn and act on the teachings of Islam will prevent one from purifying their character from negative characteristics.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner

will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“Or do those in whose hearts is disease think that Allah would never expose their [feelings of] hatred? And if We willed, We could show them to you, and you would know them by their mark...”***

This referred to the hypocrites and those who possessed weak faith and their negative feelings towards Islam. Allah, the Exalted, did not expose them to the general public in order to give them the opportunity to sincerely repent and mend their ways.

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying

evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

***“Or do those in whose hearts is disease think that Allah would never expose their [feelings of] hatred? And if We willed, We could show them to you, and you would know them by their mark...”***

This referred to the hypocrites and those who possessed weak faith and their negative feelings towards Islam. Allah, the Exalted, did not expose them to the general public in order to give them the opportunity to sincerely repent and mend their ways.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever conceals the faults of a muslim will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted, in both this world and the next. This is quite evident if one ponders over it. The people who are accustomed to exposing the faults of others are the ones whose faults are made public by Allah, the Exalted. But the one who conceals the faults of others is considered by society as someone who has no obvious faults.

There are two types of people in respect to this advice. The first are those whose wrong actions are private meaning, this person does not commit sins openly nor exposes their sins in a boastful manner to others. If this person slips up and commits a sin which becomes known to others it should be veiled as long as this does not cause harm to others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 19:

*“Indeed, those who like that immorality should be spread [or publicized] among those who have believed will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter...”*

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to overlook the mistakes of those who strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4375.

The second type of person is the wicked one who commits sins openly and does not care about people finding out about them. In fact, they often boast about the sins they have committed to others. As they inspire others to act in an evil way exposing their faults in order to warn others does not contradict this Hadith. Nor will this person have their faults exposed by Allah, the Exalted, in return for exposing the faults of this wicked person, which is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546, as long as they are exposing the faults of another for the correct reason.

***“Or do those in whose hearts is disease think that Allah would never expose their [feelings of] hatred?... but you will surely know them by the tone of [their] speech...”***

This referred to the hypocrites and those who possessed weak faith and their negative feelings towards Islam. The concept of real hypocrisy may not exist anymore but adopting their characteristics and weakness of faith still does and must therefore be avoided. This involves gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

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.

***“Or do those in whose hearts is disease think that Allah would never expose their [feelings of] hatred?... but you will surely know them by the tone of [their] speech...”***

This referred to the hypocrites and those who possessed weak faith and their negative feelings towards Islam. The concept of real hypocrisy may not exist anymore but adopting their characteristics and weakness of faith still does and must therefore be avoided. This involves gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, listed three signs of a hypocrite. Even though a muslim will not lose their faith if they act on these characteristics but it is vital to avoid them as a muslim who acts like a hypocrite may well end up with them on Judgment Day.

The first characteristic is that when they speak they lie. Meaning, they lie often. Lying is unacceptable whether it is a small lie, which is often called a white lie, or when one lies as a joke. All of these types of lying are forbidden. In fact, the one who lies to make people laugh, so their aim is not to deceive someone, has been cursed three times in one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315.

Another popular lie people often speak believing it is not a sin is when they lie to children. This is undoubtedly a sin according to Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4991. It is plain foolishness to lie to children as they will only adopt this sinful habit from the elder who lies to them. Behaving in this manner shows children lying is acceptable when it is not acceptable according to the teachings of Islam. Only in very rare and extreme cases is lying acceptable for example, lying in order to protect the life of an innocent person.

It is vital to avoid lying as according to one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, it leads to other sins such as backbiting and mocking people. This behaviour leads one to the gates of Hell. When a person continues to lie they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great liar. It does not take a scholar to predict what will happen to a person on Judgment day who has been recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great liar.

All muslims desire the company of the Angels. Yet, when a person lies they are deprived of their company. In fact, the stench that is omitted from the mouth of a liar causes the Angels to move a mile away from them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1972.

The next characteristic of hypocrisy mentioned in the main Hadith is that they betray their trusts. This includes all the trusts one possesses from Allah, the Exalted, and people. Every blessing one possesses has been entrusted to them by Allah, the Exalted. The only way to fulfill these trusts is by using the blessings in the way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

This will ensure they gain further blessings as this is true gratitude. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

The trusts between people are important to fulfill also. The one who has been entrusted with someone else's belongings should not misuse them and only use them according to the wishes of the owner. One of the greatest trusts between people is keeping conversations secret unless there is some obvious benefit in informing others. Unfortunately, this is often overlooked amongst Muslims.

The final sign of hypocrisy mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is breaking one's promises. The greatest of promises a Muslim has made is with Allah, the Exalted, which is to obey Him sincerely. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. All other promises made with people must also be kept unless one has a valid excuse especially, the ones a parent makes with children. Breaking promises only teaches children bad character and encourages them to believe being deceitful is an acceptable characteristic to possess. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2227, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He will be against the one who makes a promise in His name and then breaks it without a valid excuse. How can the one who has Allah, the Exalted, against them on Judgment Day possibly succeed?

***“Or do those in whose hearts is disease think that Allah would never expose their [feelings of] hatred?... but you will surely know them by the tone of [their] speech...”***

This referred to the hypocrites and those who possessed weak faith and their negative feelings towards Islam. The concept of real hypocrisy may not exist anymore but adopting their characteristics and weakness of faith still does and must therefore be avoided. This involves gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

A sign of hypocrisy is being two-faced. This is the one who changes their behaviour in order to please different groups of people intending thereby to gain some worldly things. They speak with many different tongues showing their support to different people while harbouring dislike for them. They fail to be sincere towards people which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. If they fail to repent they will find themselves in the hereafter with two tongues of fire. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4873. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 14:

***“When they meet the believers, they say: “We believe,” but when they meet their evil companions (in privacy), they say: “Surely we are with you; we were merely jesting.””***

***“Or do those in whose hearts is disease think that Allah would never expose their [feelings of] hatred?... but you will surely know them by the tone of [their] speech...”***

This referred to the hypocrites and those who possessed weak faith and their negative feelings towards Islam. The concept of real hypocrisy may not exist anymore but adopting their characteristics and weakness of faith still does and must therefore be avoided. This involves gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

A part of hypocrisy is that a person not only commits evil deeds themselves and abstains from righteous deeds but they encourage others to do the same. They want others to be in the same boat as them so that they find some comfort in their evil character. They not only drown themselves but take others down with them. Muslims must know that a person will be held accountable for every other person who commits a sin because of their invitation. This person will be treated as if they committed the sin even though they only invited others towards it. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 203. This is why some have said that blessed is the person whose evil dies with them because their sins will increase if others act on their evil advice even though they are no longer alive.

***“Or do those in whose hearts is disease think that Allah would never expose their [feelings of] hatred?... but you will surely know them by the tone of [their] speech...”***

This referred to the hypocrites and those who possessed weak faith and their negative feelings towards Islam. The concept of real hypocrisy may not exist anymore but adopting their characteristics and weakness of faith still does and must therefore be avoided. This involves gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

An aspect of hypocrisy is when one verbally shows support for others and their good projects such as, building a mosque but when the time comes to take part in the project such as, donating wealth they seem to disappear. Similarly, when people are facing good times they verbally support them reminding others of their loyalty to them. But the moment the people face difficulties these hypocrites offer no emotional or physical support. Instead they criticize them. This was the attitude of the hypocrites in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 62:

***“So how [will it be] when disaster strikes them because of what their hands have put forth and then they come to you swearing by Allah, “We intended nothing but good conduct and accommodation.””***

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verse 31

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّىٰ نَعْلَمَ الْمُجْتَهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَنَبْلُوَ  
أَخْبَارَكُمْ



*“And We will surely test you until We make evident those who strive among you [for the cause of Allah] and the patient, and We will test your affairs.”*

***“And We will surely test you until We make evident those who strive among you [for the cause of Allah] and the patient...”***

This verse reminds muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant muslim will have no weapon to defend himself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“And We will surely test you until We make evident those who strive among you [for the cause of Allah] and the patient...”***

In life a muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties than when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

***“And We will surely test you until We make evident those who strive among you [for the cause of Allah] and the patient...”***

It is important for muslims to understand that Allah, the Exalted, does not demand muslims to overcome the difficulties which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, endured. For example, they migrated from Mecca to Medina whereby they left behind their families, homes, businesses and migrated to a strange land all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

In comparison, the difficulties muslims face now are not as difficult as those the righteous predecessors faced. Muslims should therefore be grateful that they are only required to make a few small sacrifices, such as sacrificing some sleep to offer the obligatory dawn prayer and some wealth to donate the obligatory charity. Allah, the Exalted, is not commanding them to leave their homes and families for His sake. This gratitude must be shown practically by using the blessings one possesses in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, when a muslim faces difficulties they should remember the difficulties the righteous predecessors faced and how they overcame them through steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This knowledge can provide a muslim the strength to overcome their difficulties as they know the righteous predecessors were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they endured more severe difficulties with

patience. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, advises that the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, endured the most difficult of tests and they are undoubtedly the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted.

If a muslim follows the steadfast attitude of the righteous predecessors it is hoped they will end up with them in the hereafter.

***“And We will surely test you until We make evident those who strive among you [for the cause of Allah] and the patient...”***

It is important for muslims to recognize why their worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. 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 disobedience]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”*

As they obey Allah, the Exalted, in order to receive worldly blessings the moment they fail to receive them or encounter a difficulty they often become angered which turns them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. These people often obey and disobey Allah, the Exalted, according to the situation they are facing which in reality contradicts true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though, desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, is acceptable in Islam yet, if one persists with this attitude they may become

like those mentioned in this verse. It is far better to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to be saved in the hereafter and obtain Paradise. This person is unlikely to alter their behaviour when encountering difficulties. But the highest and best reason is to obey Allah, the Exalted, simply because He is their Lord and the Lord of the universe. This muslim, if sincere, will remain steadfast in all situations and through this obedience they will be granted both worldly and religious blessings which outstrip the worldly blessings the first type of person would ever receive.

To conclude, it is important for muslims to reflect on their intention and if necessary correct it so that it encourages them to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in all situations.

***“And We will surely test you until We make evident those who strive among you [for the cause of Allah] and the patient...”***

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 We will surely test you until We make evident those who strive among you [for the cause of Allah] and the patient...”***

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 We will surely test you until We make evident those who strive among you [for the cause of Allah] and the patient...”***

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 register<sup>1</sup> 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 We will surely test you until We make evident those who strive among you [for the cause of Allah] and the patient...”***

Muslims often increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, such as attending the Mosques for the congregational prayers or reciting more spiritual exercises in times of difficulty. But in times of ease they often relax and become lazy. But it is important to note, that generally it is more important to be more on guard and increase one's obedience during times of ease than times of difficulty. This is because one often sins more during times of ease than difficulty, such as abandoning their obligatory duties. If one reviews the different misguided people in history, such as Pharaoh and Quroon they will observe that their sins only multiplied during times of ease. Someone who is facing a difficulty where they are stuck and have no option but to patiently wait for relief is less likely to sin as they desire to be relieved of their difficulty. Whereas, a person experiencing times of ease will be in a better position to enjoy and over indulge in worldly things which often leads to sins. For example, a person facing poverty is less likely to sin as many sins require wealth. Whereas, a wealthy person is in an easier position to commit those sins, such as purchasing alcohol or drugs. Therefore, muslims should take note of this and ensure they maintain or even increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, during times of ease so that they do not fall into sins and disobedience.

In addition, the one who is obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands and refraining from His prohibitions during times of ease will gain the support of Allah, the Exalted, during their times of difficulty which will aid them to overcome them successfully. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

*“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”*

***“And We will surely test you until We make evident those who strive among you [for the cause of Allah] and the patient...”***

One will pass this test by remaining sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, in both times of ease and difficulty.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every situation is blessed for a believer. The only condition is that they need to respond to each situation they encounter while obeying Allah, the Exalted, specifically, patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease.

There are two aspects of life. One aspect are the situations people find themselves in whether they are times of ease or difficulties. The control of what situation a person faces is out of their hands. Allah, the Exalted, has decided this and there is no escaping them. Therefore, stressing over the situations one faces does not make sense as they are destined and therefore inevitable. The other aspect is a person's reaction to each situation. This is in each person's control and this is what they are judged on for example, showing patience or impatience in a difficult situation. Therefore, a muslim must concentrate on their behaviour and reaction in each situation instead of stressing over being in a situation as this is unavoidable. If a muslim desires to succeed in both worlds they should assess each situation and always act in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. For example, in times of ease they must use the blessings they possess as prescribed by Islam which is true gratitude to 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]...”*

And in times of difficulty they must show patience knowing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind the choices. 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 We will test your affairs.”***

In reality, every blessing one has been granted is a test meaning, whether a person will use the blessing in the correct way or not.

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 We will test your affairs.”***

In reality, every blessing one has been granted is a test meaning, whether a person will use the blessing in the correct way or not. 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.

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verses 32-34

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَشَاقُّوا الرَّسُولَ مِنْ  
بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيُحِطُّ  
أَعْمَلَهُمْ ﴿٣٢﴾

﴿٣٣﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوا  
أَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٣﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ مَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ  
فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ ﴿٣٤﴾

*“Indeed, those who disbelieved and averted [people] from the path of Allah and opposed the Messenger after guidance had become clear to them - never will they harm Allah at all, and He will render worthless their deeds.*

*O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and do not invalidate your deeds.*

*Indeed, those who disbelieved and averted [people] from the path of Allah and then died while they were disbelievers - never will Allah forgive them.”*

***“Indeed, those who disbelieved and averted [people] from the path of Allah...never will they harm Allah at all, and He will render worthless their deeds. O you who have believed...do not invalidate your deeds. Indeed, those who disbelieved and averted [people] from the path of Allah and then died while they were disbelievers - never will Allah forgive them.”***

These verses warn that when one averts people from right guidance it leads to the invalidation of their deeds.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who guides others to something good will receive the same reward as those who act on their advice. And those who guide others to sins will be held accountable as if they committed the sins.

It is important for muslims to be careful when advising and guiding others. A muslim should only advise others in matters of good so that they gain reward from it and avoid advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. A person will not escape punishment on Judgment Day by simply claiming they are only inviting others towards sins even if they did not commit the sins themselves. Allah, the Exalted, will hold both the guide and the follower accountable for their actions. Muslims should therefore only advise others to do the things they would do themselves. If they dislike an action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

Because of this Islamic principle muslims should ensure they gain the adequate knowledge before advising others as they can easily multiply their own sins if they incorrectly advise others.

In addition, this principle is an extremely easy way for muslims to gain reward for actions they cannot perform themselves due to a lack of means, such as wealth. For example, a person who is not financially able to donate charity can encourage others to do so and this will result in them gaining the same reward as the one who gave charity.

***“Indeed, those who disbelieved and averted [people] from the path of Allah...never will they harm Allah at all, and He will render worthless their deeds. O you who have believed...do not invalidate your deeds. Indeed, those who disbelieved and averted [people] from the path of Allah and then died while they were disbelievers - never will Allah forgive them.”***

These verses warn against bad 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.”*

***“Indeed, those who disbelieved and averted [people] from the path of Allah...never will they harm Allah at all, and He will render worthless their deeds. O you who have believed...do not invalidate your deeds. Indeed, those who disbelieved and averted [people] from the path of Allah and then died while they were disbelievers - never will Allah forgive them.”***

These verses also warn against choosing the wrong role model.

If one turns the pages of history they will observe many people who achieved great worldly success and in some cases benefited mankind yet, they will also observe at least one thing which taints their achievements. But if one observes the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will observe nothing except success and countless things which benefit mankind. Even though, there are people who falsely criticise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is quite evident from his highly accurate and detailed biography which has been verified by reliable muslim and non-muslim historians that this criticism is based on nothing but falsehood. This is why muslims must put aside all role models and instead study and adopt the flawless character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is the only way to achieve real untainted success in both one's worldly and religious life. 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...”***

There is no goal greater than this in this world. In fact, this is what people irrespective of their faith strive to achieve. And Allah, the Exalted, has placed all of it in the footsteps of his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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.”*

It is simple, if a person desires worldly and religious success they should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they choose a path other than his whatever tainted success they achieve will eventually become a burden for them and it may lead to a punishment on a Great Day.

***“Indeed, those who...opposed the Messenger after guidance had become clear to them - never will they harm Allāh at all, and He will render worthless their deeds. O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and do not invalidate your deeds.”***

These verses indicate that one can only protect their good deeds when they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Quran and 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: Allah, the Exalted, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran and to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on

the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

***“Indeed, those who...opposed the Messenger after guidance had become clear to them - never will they harm Allāh at all, and He will render worthless their deeds. O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and do not invalidate your deeds.”***

These verses indicate that one can only protect their good deeds when they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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.

***“Indeed, those who...opposed the Messenger after guidance had become clear to them - never will they harm Allāh at all, and He will render worthless their deeds. O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and do not invalidate your deeds.”***

These verses indicate that one can only protect their good deeds when they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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.

***“Indeed, those who disbelieved and averted [people] from the path of Allah and opposed the Messenger after guidance had become clear to them - never will they harm Allah at all, and He will render worthless their deeds.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both

worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and do not invalidate your deeds.”***

As obedience to Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, requires knowledge and practice, this verse therefore indicates the importance of avoiding ignorance.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and do not invalidate your deeds.”***

As obedience to Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, requires knowledge and practice, this verse therefore indicates the importance of avoiding ignorance. Ignorance in turn leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and do not invalidate your deeds.”***

Obedience to Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, requires knowledge and practice. Failing to do this can prevent one from performing and safeguarding their righteous deeds.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah,

the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and do not invalidate your deeds.”***

Obedience to Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, requires knowledge and practice. Failing to do this can prevent one from performing and safeguarding their righteous deeds.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that those who perform deeds for the sake of people, such as showing off, instead of doing them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, will be told to gain their reward on Judgment Day from the people they acted for which in reality is not possible to do.

It is important to understand that the foundation of all deeds and even Islam itself is one's intention. It is the very thing which Allah, the Exalted, judges people on according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A muslim should ensure they perform all religious and useful worldly actions for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward from Him in both worlds. A sign of this correct mentality is that this person neither expects nor desires people to appreciate or show gratitude to them for the deeds they perform. If one desires this then it indicates their incorrect intention.

In addition, acting with the correct intention prevents sadness and bitterness as the one who acts for the sake of people will eventually

encounter ungrateful people who will make them annoyed and bitter as they feel they wasted their effort and time. Unfortunately, this is seen in parents and relatives as they often fulfill their duties towards their children and relatives for their sake instead of for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. But the one who acts for the sake of Allah, the exalted, will fulfill all their duties towards others such as their children and never become bitter or enraged when they fail to show gratitude towards them. This attitude leads to peace of mind and general happiness as they know Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their righteous deed and will reward them for it. This is the way all muslims must act otherwise they may well be left empty handed on the Day of Judgment.

***“O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and do not invalidate your deeds.”***

Obedience to Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, requires knowledge and practice. Failing to do this can prevent one from performing and safeguarding their righteous deeds.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the bankrupt muslim is the one who accumulates many righteous deeds, such as fasting and prayer, but as they mistreated people their good deeds will be given to their victims and if necessary their victim's sins will be given to them on Judgement Day. This will lead to them being hurled into Hell.

It is important to understand that a muslim must fulfil two aspects of faith in order to achieve success. The first are the duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer. The second aspect is in respect to people which includes treating them kindly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true believer until they keep they physical and verbal harm away from the life and possessions of others.

It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, is infinitely forgiving meaning, He will forgive those who sincerely repent to Him. But He will

not forgive the sins which involve other people until the victim forgives first. As people are not so forgiving a muslim should be fearful that those who they have wronged will exact revenge on them by taking away their precious good deeds on Judgment Day. Even if a muslim fulfils the rights of Allah, the Exalted, they may still end up in Hell simply because they have wronged others. It is therefore important for muslims to strive to fulfil both aspects of their duties in order to obtain success in both worlds.

***“Indeed, those who disbelieved and averted [people] from the path of Allāh and then died while they were disbelievers - never will Allāh forgive them.”***

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a muslim is in danger of dying as a non-muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

*“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”*

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

## Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verse 35

فَلَا تَهِنُوا وَتَدْعُوا إِلَى السَّلَامِ وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ وَاللَّهُ مَعَكُمْ وَلَنْ  
يَتْرَكُ أَعْمَالَكُمْ



*“So do not weaken and call for peace [because of a lack of courage] while you are superior; and Allah is with you and will never deprive you of [the reward of] your deeds.”*

***“So do not weaken and call for peace [because of a lack of courage] while you are superior; and Allah is with you...”***

This could mean that one must remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and not compromise on their faith. The one who remembers Allah, the Exalted, in this manner will receive His constant support.

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He is with anyone who remembers Him.

With the rise of mental problems and disorders, such as depression, it is vital for muslims to understand the importance of this declaration. There is a small chance of a person experiencing a mental issue when they are constantly surrounded and aided by someone that truly loves them. If this is true for a person it is undoubtedly more befitting for Allah, the Exalted, who has promised to be with the one who remembers Him. Acting on this declaration alone would eliminate all mental issues, such as depression. It is the reason why being secluded from others or being amongst others did not affect the mental state of the righteous predecessors as they were always in the company of Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious that when one obtains the company of Allah, the Exalted, they will overcome all obstacles and difficulties successfully until they reach His proximity in the hereafter.

In addition, out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, has not restricted this declaration in anyway. For example, He did not declare He was only with the righteous or with those who perform specific good deeds. He in fact encompassed every muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith or how many sins they have committed. So a muslim should never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. But it is important to note the condition mentioned in this Hadith namely, to remember Allah, the Exalted. This is not only remembering Him with one's tongue but more importantly it is to remember Him through one's actions. This is only achieved by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The one who behaves in such a manner will be blessed with the company and support of Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, the more one obeys Allah, the Exalted, the more they will receive His company. What one gives is what they shall receive.

***“So do not weaken and call for peace [because of a lack of courage] while you are superior; and Allah is with you and will never deprive you of [the reward of] your deeds.”***

This could mean that one must remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and not compromise on their faith.

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.”*

***“So do not weaken and call for peace [because of a lack of courage] while you are superior; and Allah is with you and will never deprive you of [the reward of] your deeds.”***

This could mean that one must remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and not compromise on their faith.

This verse reminds muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant muslim will have no weapon to defend himself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“So do not weaken and call for peace [because of a lack of courage] while you are superior; and Allah is with you and will never deprive you of [the reward of] your deeds.”***

This verse also indicates that even if one appears to be inferior in position to those who oppose Islam in reality they will always be superior as long as they remain sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted.

In life a muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties than when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

***“So do not weaken and call for peace [because of a lack of courage] while you are superior; and Allah is with you and will never deprive you of [the reward of] your deeds.”***

This could mean that one must remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and not compromise on their faith.

In addition, this verse provides hope that as long as one strives to do something lawful and beneficial their efforts will not be wasted. If Allah, the Exalted, does not waste the efforts of people who do not even believe in Him why would He not support the muslims who believe in His Oneness and Lordship? If Allah, the Exalted, does not waste the efforts of people when they strive for the material world how can He then waste the efforts of those who strive to achieve good in the hereafter?

People should therefore, never give up striving to achieve good in both this world and in the next. Unfortunately, some muslims have given up struggling to earn a lawful income after facing some hardship. They instead opt to receive social benefits and become a burden on society. Those who are rightly entitled to receive benefits should continue to utilise them as it is their right. But those who have the ability to earn for themselves should do so.

This verse also encourages muslims to continue doing good to others even if they do not appreciate their efforts. If one acts with sincerity meaning, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they should be confident their efforts have been recorded and will be rewarded in both worlds.

To conclude, whatever lawful action a muslim performs whether its worldly, such as a business opportunity, or whether they perform a religious deed they should put full effort into it knowing that Allah, the Exalted, will support them and grant them success, sooner or later.

***“...and Allah is with you and will never deprive you of [the reward of] your deeds.”***

The condition for this is sincerity.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that those who perform deeds for the sake of people, such as showing off, instead of doing them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, will be told to gain their reward on Judgment Day from the people they acted for which in reality is not possible to do.

It is important to understand that the foundation of all deeds and even Islam itself is one's intention. It is the very thing which Allah, the Exalted, judges people on according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A muslim should ensure they perform all religious and useful worldly actions for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward from Him in both worlds. A sign of this correct mentality is that this person neither expects nor desires people to appreciate or show gratitude to them for the deeds they perform. If one desires this then it indicates their incorrect intention.

In addition, acting with the correct intention prevents sadness and bitterness as the one who acts for the sake of people will eventually encounter ungrateful people who will make them annoyed and bitter as

they feel they wasted their effort and time. Unfortunately, this is seen in parents and relatives as they often fulfill their duties towards their children and relatives for their sake instead of for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. But the one who acts for the sake of Allah, the exalted, will fulfill all their duties towards others such as their children and never become bitter or enraged when they fail to show gratitude towards them. This attitude leads to peace of mind and general happiness as they know Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their righteous deed and will reward them for it. This is the way all muslims must act otherwise they may well be left empty handed on the Day of Judgment.

Chapter 47 – Muhammad, Verses 36-38 of 38

إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوَ وَإِن تُوْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا يُؤْتِكُمْ  
أَجْرَكُمْ وَلَا يَسْأَلْكُمْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٦﴾

إِن يَسْأَلْكُمْوهَا فَيَحْفَفْكُمْ تَبْخَلُوا وَيُخْرِجْ أَضْغَانَكُمْ  
﴿٣٧﴾

هَآأَنْتُمْ هَآؤُلَآءِ تُدْعَوْنَ لِتُنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ  
فَمِنْكُمْ مَّن يَبْخُلُ وَمَنْ يَبْخُلْ فَإِنَّمَا يَبْخُلُ عَن  
نَفْسِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ ۗ وَإِن تَتَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبَدِلْ  
قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَلَكُمْ ﴿٣٨﴾

*“[This] worldly life is only amusement and diversion. And if you believe and fear Allah, He will give you your rewards and not ask you for [all] your properties.*

*If He should ask you for them [your properties] and press you, you would withhold, and He would expose your hatred [i.e., unwillingness].*

*Here you are - those invited to spend in the cause of Allah - but among you are those who withhold [out of greed]. And whoever withholds only withholds [benefit] from himself; and Allah is the Free of need, while you are the needy. And if you turn away [i.e., refuse], He will replace you with another people; then they will not be the likes of you.”*

***“[This] worldly life is only amusement and diversion...”***

When one fails to adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to this world and the hereafter they will be distracted from practically preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling their worldly desires.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

***“[This] worldly life is only amusement and diversion...”***

When one fails to adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to this world and the hereafter they will be distracted from practically preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling their worldly desires.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2377, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that he was not concerned over the excess of this material world and his example in this world is of a rider who takes a short rest under the shade of a tree and then leaves it behind by moving on.

In reality, each person is a traveller who stays in this world for a very limited time compared to where they came from meaning, the world of the souls and to where they are heading which is the eternal hereafter. In fact, this world in comparison is like waiting at a bus stop. In this Hadith this world has been compared to a shadow. This is because a shadow does not last long and fades away quickly without people even taking notice which is exactly how a person's days and nights pass away. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not mention a traveller's inn or a hotel as these are solid structures which indicate permanence. A fading shadow better describes this material world. This is because no matter how old a person is they always admit that their life flashed by and felt like a moment. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgment Day), as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated a rider not someone walking as the one who is walking would rest more under the shade of the tree than a rider. This further indicates the limited time people spend in this world.

Taking a rest in the shade indicates the importance of one correctly using the material world in order to obtain the provisions they need just like the rider takes the provision they need namely, rest. A muslim should therefore prepare for their immediate departure from this world by preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

This does not mean one should abandon this world as this Hadith clearly indicates one should make use of the material world in order to prepare for the hereafter. The rider takes a rest and muslims must gather the things which will benefit them in the hereafter instead of dedicating their time to unnecessary things which will leave them empty handed on Judgment Day. Chapter 89 Al Fajar, verses 23-24:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance? He will say, “Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.”*

***“[This] worldly life is only amusement and diversion...”***

When one fails to adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to this world and the hereafter they will be distracted from practically preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling their worldly desires.

Some muslims often claim that one's faith and the material world need to walk hand in hand with each other without a person being extreme in either. It is strange how most of those who claim this and use this statement as a way to enjoy the lawful luxuries and pleasures of this world do not truly understand nor adhere to it. This statement is true but applies to those worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. For example, occasionally exercising in order to keep the body healthy which is a trust given to a person. It does not mean one can enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world in excess while neglecting following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge even if they fulfil the standard obligatory duties. As gaining knowledge in itself is a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

In addition, walking hand in hand would suggest that one dedicates equal attention, effort and time to each thing. How many muslims can honestly say that they dedicate equal effort, energy and time to the material world and preparing for the hereafter? If they do not, and most do not, then how exactly are they fulfilling this statement?

A muslim should not fool themselves as their time on Earth is limited and they will not be given a second chance once they depart from it. Therefore, they should honestly strive to fulfil this statement by at least dedicating equal time, effort and energy to both the material world and preparing for the hereafter. It is important to note, that some would argue that treating a temporary abode and an everlasting abode equal is not wise.

***“[This] worldly life is only amusement and diversion...”***

When one fails to adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to this world and the hereafter they will be distracted from practically preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling their worldly desires.

It is important to note, the material world which one should detach from actually refers to one's desires. It does not refer to the physical world, such as the mountains. This is indicated by chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 14:

*“Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return [i.e., Paradise].”*

These things are connected to the desires of people and by them one becomes distracted from preparing for the hereafter. When one abstains from their desires they are in fact detaching from the material world. This is why a muslim who does not possess worldly things can still be regarded a worldly person because of their inner desire and love for it. Whereas, a muslim who possesses worldly things, like some of the righteous predecessors, can be considered detached from the material world as they do not desire and occupy their minds, hearts and actions with them. Instead they desire lies in the eternal hereafter.

The first level of abstinence is turning away from unlawful and vain desires which are not connected to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This person busies themselves in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities all the while focusing on the hereafter. They turn away from things and people who prevent them from fulfilling this important deed.

The next stage of abstinence is when one takes only the things they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities. They do not occupy their time on things which will not derive them benefit in the next world. This is the advice given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. He advised a muslim to live in this material world as a stranger or a traveller. Both types of people will only take what they need from the material world in order to reach their destination meaning, the hereafter safely. A muslim can achieve this by understanding how close their death and departure to the hereafter is. Not only can death pounce on a person at any time but even if one lives a long life it seems as though it passed in a moment. By realising this reality one sacrifices the moment for the sake of the eternal hereafter. Shortening one's hope for a long life in this material world will encourage them to perform righteous deeds, sincerely repent from their sins and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over all else. The one who hopes for a long life will be inspired to behave in the opposite manner.

The one who is truly abstinent in the material world neither blames it nor praises it. They do not rejoice when they gain it nor do they grieve when it

passes them by. The mind of this pious muslim is too focused on the eternal hereafter to greedily notice the small material world.

***“[This] worldly life is only amusement and diversion...”***

When one fails to adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to this world and the hereafter they will be distracted from practically preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling their worldly desires.

It is important for muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to

them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“[This] worldly life is only amusement and diversion...”***

When one fails to adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to this world and the hereafter they will be distracted from practically preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling their worldly desires. The root of the behaviour mentioned in this verse is ignorance.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“[This] worldly life is only amusement and diversion...”***

When one fails to adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to this world and the hereafter they will be distracted from practically preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling their worldly desires. The root of the behaviour mentioned in this verse is ignorance. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart

which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“...And if you believe and fear Allāh, He will give you your rewards...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“...And if you believe and fear Allāh, He will give you your rewards...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai,

number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“...And if you believe and fear Allāh, He will give you your rewards...”***

Piety/Fearing Allah, the Exalted, cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the

first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“...And if you believe and fear Allāh, He will give you your rewards...”***

One will receive their reward when they actualize their faith.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“...And if you believe and fear Allāh, He will give you your rewards and not ask you for your properties...Here you are - those invited to spend in the cause of Allāh - but among you are those who withhold [out of greed]. And whoever withholds only withholds [benefit] from himself; and Allāh is the Free of need, while you are the needy...”***

It is important to understand that the prohibitions and commands of Allah, the Exalted, do not exist to make people's life harder. They only exist in order to benefit people in both this world and in the next even if these benefits are not apparent to people. For example, the negative effects of alcohol, which science has proven, was not always apparent such as its negative effect on the organs of the body. It only became unlawful in Islam to protect people from this and other harms. In addition, It is an aspect of faith to accept something without understanding its wisdoms. If all the wisdoms of the commands and prohibitions were made apparent then it would not allow muslims to possess complete faith. Allah, the Exalted, does not benefit from these commands and prohibitions only people do.

***“...And if you believe and fear Allāh, He will give you your rewards and not ask you for [all] your properties. If He should ask you for them and press you, you would withhold, and He would expose your hatred [i.e., unwillingness]. Here you are - those invited to spend in the cause of Allāh - but among you are those who withhold [out of greed]. And whoever withholds only withholds [benefit] from himself; and Allāh is the Free of need, while you are the needy...”***

In reality, true belief involves recognising that every blessing one has been granted was created and belongs to Allah, the Exalted. This recognition will encourage one to then use these blessings in the correct way meaning, 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.

***“...And if you believe and fear Allāh, He will give you your rewards and not ask you for [all] your properties. If He should ask you for them and press you, you would withhold, and He would expose your hatred [i.e., unwillingness]. Here you are - those invited to spend in the cause of Allāh - but among you are those who withhold [out of greed]. And whoever withholds only withholds [benefit] from himself; and Allāh is the Free of need, while you are the needy...”***

In reality, true belief involves recognising that every blessing one has been granted was created and belongs to Allah, the Exalted. This recognition will encourage one to then use these blessings in the correct way meaning, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2336, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every day two Angels supplicate to Allah, the Exalted. The first asks Allah, the Exalted, to compensate the one who spends for His sake. The second asks Allah, the Exalted, to destroy the one who withholds.

The aim of this Hadith is to encourage one to become generous and avoid being stingy. It is important to note that spending for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, does not only involve the obligatory charity but it also includes spending on one's own necessities and the necessities of their family as this has been commanded by Islam. Anyone who fails to spend on these elements deserves for their wealth to be destroyed as they have failed to fulfil its purpose which in reality makes wealth useless. It is important to note, spending for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, never leads to an overall

loss as a person is compensated one way or another. In fact the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed that charity does not decrease one's wealth in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029. Chapter 34 Saba, verse 39:

*“...But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it...”*

A muslim should remember a generous person is close to Allah, the Exalted, close to Paradise, close to people and far from Hell. Whereas, the stingy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

Finally, it is important to note that this Hadith applies to all blessings one possesses, such as their good health, not just wealth. So if one fails to dedicate and expend their blessings in the correct way as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, the supplication against their blessing by the Angel maybe accepted by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, it is vital for muslims to correctly use each blessing according to the teachings of Islam so that they receive more which in reality is true gratitude. Otherwise, they may well lose the blessing forever. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

***“...And if you believe and fear Allāh, He will give you your rewards and not ask you for [all] your properties. If He should ask you for them and press you, you would withhold, and He would expose your hatred [i.e., unwillingness]. Here you are - those invited to spend in the cause of Allāh - but among you are those who withhold [out of greed]. And whoever withholds only withholds [benefit] from himself; and Allāh is the Free of need, while you are the needy...”***

In reality, true belief involves recognising that every blessing one has been granted was created and belongs to Allah, the Exalted. This recognition will encourage one to then use these blessings in the correct way meaning, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6444, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the rich in this world will be poor in the hereafter unless they spend their wealth correctly but these people are a few in number.

This means that the majority of wealthy people incorrectly spend their wealth meaning, on things which are either vain and therefore provide them with no benefit in the hereafter, or they spend on sinful things which will become a burden for them in both worlds or they spend on lawful things in a way disliked by Islam such as being wasteful or extravagant. Because of these reasons the rich will become poor on Judgment Day as they will be held accountable and even punished over them.

In addition, those who fail to spend their wealth correctly will find that their wealth abandons them at their grave and so they will reach the hereafter empty handed meaning, as a pauper. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379. The deceased will leave the wealth behind for others to enjoy while they are held accountable for it.

Finally, as the wealthy are distracted by gaining, hoarding, safeguarding and increasing their wealth it distracts them from performing righteous deeds which is the thing that will make someone rich on Judgment Day. In reality, losing out on this will make them poor.

It is important to note, spending wealth correctly is not only donating charity but includes one's spending on their necessities and the necessities of their dependents without being wasteful or extravagant.

The truly rich person is the one who uses their wealth correctly as prescribed by Islam. This person will be rich in this world and in the next. And this attitude is not dependent of having much wealth. Any amount of wealth used correctly will cause one to become rich even if they possess little wealth. In reality, this person takes their wealth with them to the hereafter and this attitude provides them free time which allows them to perform righteous deeds which only increases their richness in the hereafter.

***“...And if you believe and fear Allāh, He will give you your rewards and not ask you for [all] your properties. If He should ask you for them and press you, you would withhold, and He would expose your hatred [i.e., unwillingness]. Here you are - those invited to spend in the cause of Allāh - but among you are those who withhold [out of greed]. And whoever withholds only withholds [benefit] from himself; and Allāh is the Free of need, while you are the needy...”***

In reality, true belief involves recognising that every blessing one has been granted was created and belongs to Allah, the Exalted. This recognition will encourage one to then use these blessings in the correct way meaning, 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.

***“...but among you are those who withhold [out of greed]. And whoever withholds only withholds [benefit] from himself; and Allāh is the Free of need, while you are the needy...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2511, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to avoid greed.

Greed can lead one to withholding the obligatory charity which only leads to destruction in both worlds. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that the person who does not donate their obligatory charity will encounter a large poisonous snake which will continuously bite them on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 180:

*“And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection...”*

If one's greed prevents them from donating voluntary charity it may not be unlawful but it is highly undesirable as this contradicts the characteristic of a true believer. Put simply, the stingy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

***“...but among you are those who withhold [out of greed]. And whoever withholds only withholds [benefit] from himself; and Allāh is the Free of need, while you are the needy...”***

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.

***“...And if you turn away [from obedience], He will replace you with another people; then they will not be the likes of you.”***

This obedience involves sincerely following and obeying the two sources of guidance revealed by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions 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 Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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 if you turn away [from obedience], He will replace you with another people; then they will not be the likes of you.”***

This obedience involves sincerely following and obeying the two sources of guidance revealed by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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 if you turn away [from obedience], He will replace you with another people; then they will not be the likes of you.”***

This obedience involves sincerely following and obeying the two sources of guidance revealed by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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.

***“...And if you turn away [from obedience], He will replace you with another people; then they will not be the likes of you.”***

Muslims must remember the very important position they have been appointed to by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the ambassadors of Islam. It is extremely important for muslims to fulfil this duty according to their potential. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many muslims today believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A muslim should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

In addition, this important position should remind muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted,

become angry with the muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## Chapter 48 – Al Fath, Verses 1-3

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا ﴿١﴾

لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ  
عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ﴿٢﴾

وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللَّهُ نَصْرًا عَزِيمًا ﴿٣﴾

*“Indeed, We have given you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], a clear conquest.*

*That Allah may forgive for you what preceded of your lapses and what will follow and complete His favor upon you and guide you to a straight path.*

*And [that] Allah may aid you with a mighty victory.”*

***“Indeed, We have given you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], a clear conquest.”***

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions all of which seemed to outwardly favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. After the pact was signed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, returned to Medina without performing the Visitation (Umra), which was part of the pact. This pact of peace for ten years in reality favored the Muslims. Prior to this pact whenever Muslims and non-Muslims met it often led to some sort of fighting but when warfare came to an end because of the pact whenever these people met they only conversed. When Islam was explained to the non-Muslims they began to accept it. Islam entered the hearts of more people in the next two years than it did in all the previous years since its coming. This clear victory was acknowledged by Allah, the Exalted, who revealed chapter 48 Al Fath after the agreement had been signed. Chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 1:

*“Indeed, We have given you, a clear conquest”*

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 231.

This superiority and success was granted to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as they remained sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. Even though the number of Muslims have increased over time it is obvious that the strength of Muslims has only decreased. Each Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith believes in the authenticity of the Holy Quran as doubting it would cause them to lose their faith. In the following verse Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to obtaining superiority and success which would remove the weakness and grief Muslims are experiencing all around the world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

*“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”*

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Muslims only need to become true believers in order to achieve this superiority and success in both worlds. True belief involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him. This includes the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and those towards people, such as loving for others what one loves for themselves which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This requires one to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Through this attitude was success and superiority granted to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And if Muslims desire to achieve it then they must return to this rightly guided attitude. As Muslims believe in the Holy Quran they should understand this simple teaching and act on it.

***“That Allah may forgive for you what preceded of your lapses and what will follow...”***

The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were protected from committing sins but occasionally they may have decided to do something lawful even though another path was the better and more favoured option by Allah, the Exalted. For normal people this would not even be considered a lapse yet it would be for the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, as they were on the high station of Prophethood. The higher one's station the more stricter their accountability. In addition, this verse could also be referring to the fact that worshipping and obeying Allah, the Exalted, the way He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped is simply impossible. So the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, would seek forgiveness for their efforts as they believed their obedience and worship was not worthy of Allah, the Exalted.

Finally, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has been commanded to seek forgiveness for his lapses it increases the seriousness of the command in respect to his followers.

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.

***“That Allāh may...complete His favor upon you...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is infinitely bountiful and bestows favours and blessings without recompense or external cause. He gives generously without being asked.

The muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to 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]...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by bestowing the blessings they have been given to others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted.

The one who gives to others will be given more than they could have ever imagined. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.”*

***“That Allāh may...complete His favor upon you...”***

This verse is connected to chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

*“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”*

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfil the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's

day. A muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

***“That Allāh may...guide you to a straight path.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who guides His servants to what is beneficial for them in both worlds and guides them away from anything which harms them. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verse 8:

*“And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness.”*

The muslim who understands this divine name will seek guidance in worldly and religious matters from none other than Allah, the Exalted, through the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever seeks guidance from anything else will not find lasting success.

A muslim should act on this divine name by guiding others towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and what is beneficial to them in both worldly and religious matters according to their knowledge. This will ensure they become a true believer meaning, the one who loves for others what they desire for themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

***“That Allāh may...complete His favor upon you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and guide you to a straight path.”***

If one desires to share in these favours and right guidance then they must sincerely obey and follow 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.

***“That Allāh may...complete His favor upon you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and guide you to a straight path.”***

If one desires to share in these favours and right guidance then they must sincerely obey and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

If one turns the pages of history they will observe many people who achieved great worldly success and in some cases benefited mankind yet, they will also observe at least one thing which taints their achievements. But if one observes the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will observe nothing except success and countless things which benefit mankind. Even though, there are people who falsely criticise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is quite evident from his highly accurate and detailed biography which has been verified by reliable muslim and non-muslim historians that this criticism is based on nothing but falsehood. This is why muslims must put aside all role models and instead study and adopt the flawless character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is the only way to achieve real untainted success in both one's worldly and religious life. 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...”*

There is no goal greater than this in this world. In fact, this is what people irrespective of their faith strive to achieve. And Allah, the Exalted, has placed all of it in the footsteps of his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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.”*

It is simple, if a person desires worldly and religious success they should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they choose a path other than his whatever tainted success they achieve will eventually become a burden for them and it may lead to a punishment on a Great Day.

***“Indeed, We have given you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], a clear conquest... And [that] Allāh may aid you with a mighty victory.”***

The first verse refers to the Pact of Hudaibiya, which created peace between Islam and the non-muslims of Mecca. This allowed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to preach Islam openly without fear and distractions. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 231.

This led to the second victory mentioned in the end of the main verses under discussion namely, the Conquest of Mecca.

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a leader of Mecca became astonished at their power and number. He commented that he saw many faces he did not recognize who had come to conquer Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that this was only a consequence of the actions of the non-Muslims. The Muslim

army believed in him when the non-Muslims of Mecca called him a liar and they assisted him when the non-Muslims of Mecca exiled him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 393.

It is important for Muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a Muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A Muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice Muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“Indeed, We have given you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], a clear conquest... And [that] Allāh may aid you with a mighty victory.”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4297, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a day would soon come when other nations would attack the muslim nation and even though they would be great in number they would be deemed insignificant by the world. Allah, the Exalted, would remove the fear of muslims from the hearts’ of the other nations. This would occur because of the muslim nation’s love for the material world and their hatred for death.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were small in number yet, they overcame entire nations whereas the muslims today are greater in number yet, have no social or political influence in the world. This is because the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, lived their lives according to the teachings of Islam thereby, favouring and preparing for the hereafter over enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. Whereas, most of the muslims today have adopted the opposite mind-set. It is important to understand that the root of all sins is the love of the material world. This is because any sin which is committed is done out of love and desire for it. The material world can be split into four aspects: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their relatives and friends. It is in the excess pursuit of these things which lead to sins, such as earning unlawful wealth out of love for fortune. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that love for wealth and authority is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction two hungry wolves would cause if they were let loose on a herd of sheep. Whenever people seek the excess of these aspects of the material world it always leads to disobedience of Allah, the

Exalted. When this occurs the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is removed which leads to nothing but trouble.

Even though, some muslims believe pursuing the excess things of the material world is harmless it is something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3158. He warned that he did not fear poverty for muslims. What he feared was that muslims would pursue the excess of this material world, such as excess wealth, and this would cause them to compete with each other over it and this would lead to their destruction. As warned in this Hadith this was the behaviour of the past nations.

As the material world is limited it is obvious that people would have to compete over it if they desired more than their necessities. This competition would cause them to adopt the characteristics which contradict the character of a true muslim, such as envy and enmity for others. They would stop caring for each other as they are too busy competing in gathering and hoarding the material world. And they would contradict the advice given in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6011, which advises that muslims should act like one body when any part of the body suffers from an illness the rest of the body shares in the pain. This competition would drive a muslim to stop loving for others what they love for themselves which is a characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, as they desire to outdo their fellow muslims in worldly things. Persisting on this competition will cause a muslim to love, hate, give and withhold all for the sake of the material world instead of for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This

competition is the difference between the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and many of the muslims today.

If muslims desire to regain the strength and influence Islam once had they must strive and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over striving for obtaining and hoarding the excess of this material world. This must occur from an individual level until it affects the whole nation.

***“Indeed, We have given you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], a clear conquest... And [that] Allāh may aid you with a mighty victory.”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that he did not fear poverty for the muslim nation. Instead he feared that the world would become easy to obtain and plentiful for them. This would cause them to compete for it which would lead to their destruction as this same competition destroyed the previous nations.

It is important to understand that this does not only apply to wealth. But this warning applies to all aspects of people's worldly desires which can be encompassed by the desire for fame, wealth, authority and the social aspects of one's life, such as family, friends and a career. Whenever one aims to fulfil their desires by pursuing these things, even if they are lawful, beyond their needs it will distract them from preparing for the hereafter. It will lead them to bad character such as being wasteful and extravagant and may even take them towards sins in order to obtain these things. Failing to obtain them may lead to impatience and other acts of defiance and disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious these desires have taken control over many muslims as they would happily get up in the middle of the night in order to obtain these things such as wealth or go on a holiday but will fail to do so when advised to offer the voluntary night prayer or attend the morning obligatory prayer at the Mosque with congregation.

There is no harm in obtaining these things as long as they are lawful and required in order to fulfil a person's needs and the needs of their dependents. But when a person goes beyond this then they will become preoccupied with them at the loss of their hereafter as the more one pursues their desires the less they will strive in preparing for the hereafter. And therefore, the warning given in this Hadith will apply to them.

Chapter 48 – Al Fath, Verses 4-7

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِيمَانًا  
مَعَ إِيْمَانِهِمْ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ جُنُودُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا  
حَكِيمًا ﴿٤﴾

لِيَدْخُلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ  
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَيُكَفَّرُ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ ۗ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ  
فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٥﴾

وَيُعَذِّبُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ  
الظَّالِمِينَ ۗ بِاللَّهِ ظَنَنَ السَّوْءَ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ ۗ وَغَضِبَ  
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَنَهُمْ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا  
﴿٦﴾

وَلِلَّهِ جُنُودُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٧﴾

*“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith. And to Allah belong the soldiers of the heavens and the earth, and ever is Allah Knowing and Wise.*

*[And] that He may admit the believing men and the believing women to gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide therein eternally and remove from them their misdeeds - and ever is that, in the sight of Allah, a great attainment.*

*And [that] He may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women, and the polytheist men and polytheist women - those who assume about Allah an assumption of evil nature. Upon them is a misfortune of evil nature; and Allah has become angry with them and has cursed them and prepared for them Hell, and evil it is as a destination.*

*And to Allah belong the soldiers of the heavens and the earth. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise.”*

***“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers...”***

This tranquillity and peace is only granted to the believers.

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*“And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion.....”*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to

fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers...”***

This tranquillity and peace is only granted to the believers.

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing,

misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers...”***

This tranquillity and peace is only granted to the believers.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers...”***

This tranquillity and peace is only granted to the believers.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to

the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers...”***

This tranquillity and peace is only granted to the believers.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who

possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers...”***

This tranquillity and peace is only granted to the believers.

It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

*“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”*

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of

the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

***“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers...”***

This tranquillity and peace is only granted to the believers.

Many people strive to achieve more in this material world even though they have already gained much worldly success. Even though, Islam does not prohibit this type of mentality as long as unlawful things are avoided a muslim should understand an important reality. It is obvious that peace of mind is not obtained with many worldly possessions, such as wealth. In fact, these people are often the ones who end up depressed to the point they even commit suicide. Human worldly desires have been created in such a way that no matter what one obtains they always desire more irrespective of their faith and social status. For example, Pharaoh who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, obtained every worldly blessing imaginable yet, he still did not obtain peace of mind and satisfaction. Instead his desire for more pushed him to such a stage that he desired to be worshipped like a God. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 24:

*“And said, “I am your most exalted lord.””*

No matter what desires a person fulfils it only leads them to desiring more things. A person who owns two houses wants three; the millionaire wants to become a billionaire. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number

6439, that the person who has one valley of gold would only desire another. A muslim who desires true peace of mind, which is more valuable than the treasures of the Earth, should therefore limit their worldly desires. The more they limit them and only fulfil their necessities and responsibilities the more they will obtain peace of mind. This mentality closes the doors of preoccupation and striving for more worldly things which in turn gives rest to both the mind and body. If a muslim couples this with striving in the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, then they will be granted true peace of mind which extends to every aspect of their life in both worlds. But the more worldly desires they have the more their mind and body will be preoccupied with them and thus the further from true peace of mind they will be.

***“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers...”***

Those who possess a sound heart will be granted this blessing.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one’s spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one’s tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in

fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith...”***

Ignorance prevents certainty of faith.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith...”***

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause

them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith...[And] that He may admit the believing men and the believing women to gardens...”***

When one strives to gain and act on Islamic knowledge it leads to certainty of faith. This will encourage them to remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This in turn leads to peace and success in both worlds. As indicated by these verses, this achievement has nothing to do with a person's gender or any other social barrier which separates people from one another.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or wealth. Even though, many muslims have erected these barriers such as social castes and sects thereby believing some are better than others Islam has clearly rejected this concept and declared that in this respect all people are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

***“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith...[And] that He may admit the believing men and the believing women to gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide therein eternally and remove from them their misdeeds...”***

When one strives to gain and act on Islamic knowledge it leads to certainty of faith. This will encourage them to remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This in turn leads to peace and success in both worlds.

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never

overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith...[And] that He may admit the believing men and the believing women to gardens...- and ever is that, in the sight of Allāh, a great attainment.”***

When one strives to gain and act on Islamic knowledge it leads to certainty of faith. This will encourage them to remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This in turn leads to peace and success in both worlds.

It is important for muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it

led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient.” And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves.”*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. 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.”*

***“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith...[And] that He may admit the believing men and the believing women to gardens...- and ever is that, in the sight of Allāh, a great attainment.”***

When one strives to gain and act on Islamic knowledge it leads to certainty of faith. This will encourage them to remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This in turn leads to peace and success in both worlds.

Greatness and true success is not connected to worldly things, such as wealth or fame. A person may obtain some worldly success through these things but it is quite obvious if one turns the pages of history that this type of success is very temporary and it eventually becomes a burden and regret for a person. A muslim should never believe that superiority lies in these things thereby dedicating themselves to obtaining them while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Nor should they look down at others who do not possess these worldly things believing they have no value or significance as this attitude contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6071, that the people of Paradise are those who are considered insignificant by society and concluded that if they took an oath on something Allah, the Exalted, would fulfil it for them.

True honour, success and greatness in this world and the next only lies in piety. So the more one sincerely strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the greater they are even if they appear insignificant to society. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore search for true success in this and not waste their time and efforts in searching for it in worldly things otherwise they may well reach the hereafter a great loser. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

*“Say, “Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.””*

***“It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith...[And] that He may admit the believing men and the believing women to gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide therein eternally and remove from them their misdeeds - and ever is that, in the sight of Allāh, a great attainment.”***

When one strives to gain and act on Islamic knowledge it leads to certainty of faith. This will encourage them to remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This in turn leads to peace and success in both worlds.

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His

prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

***“...And to Allāh belong the soldiers of the heavens and the earth...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who possesses all sovereignty which is free of all defects. It is a sovereignty which has no beginning, no end, no reduction and no limit. Allah, the Exalted, has complete and total control over the creation through management and judgment without any limitations, partners or helpers. The King cannot be hindered or prevented from carrying out His will.

By accepting Allah, the Exalted, as the only King a muslim indirectly accepts their servanthood to Him. Therefore, they must fulfil all His commands and avoid all His prohibitions. A true servant never questions the wise decisions of the King and instead submits with full trust to His choices knowing that the wise King only decrees the best for His servant. 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.”*

When a muslim recognises Allah, the Exalted, as the King they will not turn to another when seeking help and instead only seek His support through sincere obedience to Him. They will always remember if they obey the King He will protect them from the creation. But if they obey the creation over Allah, the Exalted, the creation will not be able to protect them from the

punishment of the only King. This is indicated in a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. He declared that there is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator.

A muslim should adopt this characteristic according to their status by purifying their inner spiritual king namely, the spiritual heart through acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will cause their servants meaning, their bodily limbs, to obey their spiritual heart in acts of righteousness. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that if the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body will be pure but if the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body will become corrupt. One should not become a slave of their evil desires and instead become a true king which controls their desires according to the teachings of Islam.

Whoever perfects this will be given a spiritual kingdom in both worlds. The ultimate destination of the one who fulfils the rights of the King by perfecting servanthood has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. They will be granted a high station in the presence of the only Omnipotent King. Chapter 54 Al Qamar, verse 55:

*“In a seat of honour near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”*

***“...And to Allāh belong the soldiers of the heavens and the earth...”***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, there are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But there are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

*“Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”*

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe

that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

***“...and ever is Allāh Knowing...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“...and ever is Allāh...Wise.”***

Allah, the Exalted, possesses infinite knowledge of all things and their real nature and acts according to His infinite wisdom in a perfect manner. The muslim who understands this divine name will never object to His choices and decrees knowing that there is wisdom behind each choice of Allah, the Exalted, which benefits His servants even if they are not obvious to 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 act on this divine name by using their knowledge and blessings according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, as this is the ultimate wisdom a person can possess.

***“It is He who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith. And to Allāh belong the soldiers of the heavens and the earth, and ever is Allāh Knowing and Wise.”***

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions. One of which was that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not perform the Visitation (Umra) that year and instead he would return the following year. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, like many of the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not pleased with these conditions as they seemed outwardly to favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. So he spoke to Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, about this and Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, reminded him to remain firm on the obedience to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then discussed this matter with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the latter declared that he would not oppose

the command of Allah, the Exalted, and He would never let his mission fail. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 228-229.

This incident reminds Muslims to always remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even in situations which are unclear to them. This is how the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, reacted even when they were initially confused. Because of this steadfastness Allah, the Exalted, granted them with the tranquillity mentioned in the main verse under discussion. This has been discussed in Tafseer Ibn Kathir, Volume 9, Page 128.

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 [that] He may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women...”***

This verse warns against bad companionship.

Muslims should note that a major sign of true love is when one directs their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is because obedience leads to success and safety in both this world and in the hereafter. A person who does not desire safety and success for a person can never truly love them irrespective of what they claim or how they treat the other person. The same way a person becomes happy when their beloved obtains worldly success, like a job, they will also desire their beloved to obtain success in the hereafter. If a person does not care about another obtaining safety and success especially, in the next world then they do not love them.

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

Therefore, a muslim should assess whether those in their life direct them towards Allah, the Exalted, or not. If they do then it is a clear sign of their love for them. If they do not then it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

***“And [that] He may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, listed three signs of a hypocrite. Even though a muslim will not lose their faith if they act on these characteristics but it is vital to avoid them as a muslim who acts like a hypocrite may well end up with them on Judgment Day.

The first characteristic is that when they speak they lie. Meaning, they lie often. Lying is unacceptable whether it is a small lie, which is often called a white lie, or when one lies as a joke. All of these types of lying are forbidden. In fact, the one who lies to make people laugh, so their aim is not to deceive someone, has been cursed three times in one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315.

Another popular lie people often speak believing it is not a sin is when they lie to children. This is undoubtedly a sin according to Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4991. It is plain foolishness to lie to children as they will only adopt this sinful habit from the elder who lies to them. Behaving in this manner shows children lying is acceptable when it is not acceptable according to the teachings of Islam. Only in very rare and extreme cases is lying acceptable for example, lying in order to protect the life of an innocent person.

It is vital to avoid lying as according to one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, it leads to other sins such as backbiting and mocking people. This behaviour leads one to the gates of Hell. When a person continues to lie they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great liar. It does not take a scholar to predict what will happen to a person on Judgment day who has been recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great liar.

All muslims desire the company of the Angels. Yet, when a person lies they are deprived of their company. In fact, the stench that is omitted from the mouth of a liar causes the Angels to move a mile away from them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1972.

The next characteristic of hypocrisy mentioned in the main Hadith is that they betray their trusts. This includes all the trusts one possesses from Allah, the Exalted, and people. Every blessing one possesses has been entrusted to them by Allah, the Exalted. The only way to fulfill these trusts is by using the blessings in the way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they gain further blessings as this is true gratitude. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

The trusts between people are important to fulfill also. The one who has been entrusted with someone else's belongings should not misuse them and only use them according to the wishes of the owner. One of the greatest trusts between people is keeping conversations secret unless there is some obvious benefit in informing others. Unfortunately, this is often overlooked amongst Muslims.

The final sign of hypocrisy mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is breaking one's promises. The greatest of promises a Muslim has made is with Allah, the Exalted, which is to obey Him sincerely. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. All other promises made with people must also be kept unless one has a valid excuse especially, the ones a parent makes with children. Breaking promises only teaches children bad character and encourages them to believe being deceitful is an acceptable characteristic to possess. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2227, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He will be against the one who makes a promise in His name and then breaks it without a valid excuse. How can the one who has Allah, the Exalted, against them on Judgment Day possibly succeed?

***“And [that] He may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women...”***

A sign of hypocrisy is showing off to people in order to seek fame and other worldly things. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 142:

*“Indeed, the hypocrites [think to] deceive Allah, but He is deceiving them. And when they stand for prayer, they stand lazily, showing [themselves to] the people and not remembering Allah except a little.”*

Showing off is such a serious spiritual disease that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, classified it as the minor version of polytheism in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. In fact, the one who does this will not gain any reward from Allah, the Exalted, in this world or in the next. They will be told on Judgment Day to seek their reward from the people they acted for, which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Showing off is so deadly that it will completely ruin a person irrespective of the righteous deeds they have performed. For example, a martyr, scholar and a generous person will be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day because of showing off even though their deeds were extremely righteous. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

***“And [that] He may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women and the polytheist men and polytheist women...”***

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 [that] He may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women, and the polytheist men and polytheist women - those who assume about Allāh an assumption of evil nature...”***

It is important for muslims to avoid this attitude and instead adopt the correct belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, which have been explained in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2736, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever knows the ninety nine names of Allah, the Exalted, will enter Paradise.

Knowing does not only refer to memorizing them. It actually means to study them and act on them according to one's status and potential. For example, Allah, the Exalted, is the Most Merciful according to His infinite status. This attribute means that Allah, the Exalted, bestows countless favours on the creation and is always extremely kind to them. This same characteristic has been attributed to others such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 128:

*“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you [i.e., your guidance] and to the believers is kind and merciful.”*

When used in reference to the creation merciful means soft-hearted and compassionate. Similarly, Allah, the Exalted, is All Forgiving according to His infinite status. And adopting this attribute by forgiving others is something which has been encouraged in Islam. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”*

So the divine attributes of Allah, the Exalted, can be adopted by muslims according to their status.

Therefore, muslims must first understand the meaning of the divine attributes and names and then adopt the meaning of the names in their character through action until they become firmly rooted into their spiritual heart so that they can achieve noble character.

***“And [that] He may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women, and the polytheist men and polytheist women - those who assume about Allāh an assumption of evil nature...”***

It is important for muslims to avoid this attitude and instead adopt the correct belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, which have been explained in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Failing to do this creates false ideas about Allah, the Exalted, in the mind of a person, such as adopting wishful thinking when they believe they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then

hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey 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 whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

A specific type of wishful thinking which affected the past nations and even the muslim nation is when a person believes that they can ignore the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, and somehow someone on the Day of Judgement will intercede for them and save them from Hell. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact and has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less even with his intercession some muslims whose punishment will be reduced by it will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil convinces those who do not believe in Judgement Day that even if it occurs they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on that day by claiming that they were not so bad as they avoided major crimes such as murder. They have convinced themselves that their pleas will be accepted and they will be sent to Paradise even though they disbelieved in Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. This is incredibly foolish as Allah, the Exalted, will not treat the person who believed in Him and tried to obey him like the one who disbelieved in Him. A single verse has erased this type of wishful thinking. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

*“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”*

***“And [that] He may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women, and the polytheist men and polytheist women...Upon them is a misfortune of evil nature...”***

One should never plot to do an evil thing as it will always, one way or another, backfire on them. Even if these consequences are delayed to the next world they will face them eventually. For example, the brothers of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, desired to harm him as they desired the love, respect and affection of their father the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him. But it is clear that their scheming only put them further away from their desire. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 18:

*“And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, “Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting...”*

The more one plots evil the more Allah, the Exalted, will put them further from their goal. Even if they outwardly achieve their desire Allah, the Exalted, will cause the very thing they desired to become a curse for them in both worlds unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then do they await except the way [i.e., fate] of the former peoples?...”*

***“And [that] He may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women, and the polytheist men and polytheist women...Upon them is a misfortune of evil nature; and Allāh has become angry with them and has cursed them...”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be

thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And [that] He may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women, and the polytheist men and polytheist women...Upon them is a misfortune of evil nature; and Allāh has become angry with them and has cursed them...”***

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to

report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“And [that] He may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women, and the polytheist men and polytheist women...Upon them is a misfortune of evil nature; and Allāh has become angry with them and has cursed them...”***

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who have been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears

the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“And [that] He may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women, and the polytheist men and polytheist women...and Allāh has become angry with them and has cursed them...”***

Cursing is when one supplicates for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, to be removed from something or someone else. Only Allah, the Exalted, is aware of who deserves to be cursed and deprived of His mercy. Therefore, one should avoid this foolish habit. Cursing someone who does not deserve it is a foul act and the one who desires the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, to be removed from someone else may find that it is removed from them instead. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2019, that a true believer does not curse. The muslims who have the habit of cursing are so disliked by Allah, the Exalted, that they will be deprived of being witnesses and intercessors on the Day of Judgment. Allah, the Exalted, will dislike showing them off to the rest of creation on the Last Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6610.

Finally, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6652, highlights the severity of cursing a believer. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that cursing a believer is like killing them.

Even if one deserves to be cursed it is safer and wiser to abstain and instead utter words which will please Allah, the Exalted, such as His remembrance.

***“And [that] He may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women, and the polytheist men and polytheist women - those who assume about Allāh an assumption of evil nature. Upon them is a misfortune of evil nature; and Allāh has become angry with them and has cursed them and prepared for them Hell, and evil it is as a destination.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“And [that] He may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women, and the polytheist men and polytheist women - those who assume about Allāh an assumption of evil nature. Upon them is a misfortune of evil nature; and Allāh has become angry with them and has cursed them and prepared for them Hell, and evil it is as a destination.”***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

***“...And ever is Allāh Exalted in Might...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who over powers all things, who in reality is the only One who possesses power and might. Anyone else who possesses strength only does so because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. There is no atom in this world or in the next that can escape the power and authority of Allah, the Exalted.

As all power belongs to Allah, the Exalted, a muslim should therefore always remember that the strength to perform righteous deeds and refrain from sins comes from Allah, the Exalted, alone. This will remove any chance of pride creeping into their heart. An atom's worth of which is enough to take a person to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Whoever desires for their faith to become mighty must obey the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be granted strong faith which will aid them to overcome all difficulties so that they leave this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. True obedience only lies in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. 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.”*

Truly Knowing Allah, the Exalted, is All Mighty should prevent a muslim from sinning. As they should know there is no way to escape the might of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, when a muslim engraves this divine name into their heart it prevents them from committing oppression and wronging others. They become fully aware that even if there is no person powerful enough to seek justice from them Allah, the Exalted, will certainly take them to account and punish them in both worlds. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, oppression to others may cause the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted, to hurl them into Hell on Judgment Day.

## Chapter 48 – Al Fath, Verses 8-10

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٨﴾

لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُعَزِّرُوهُ وَتُوَقِّرُوهُ وَتُسَبِّحُوهُ  
بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٩﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ  
أَيْدِيهِمْ فَمَنْ نَكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِمَا  
عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَسَيُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٠﴾

*“Indeed, We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner.*

*That you [people] may believe in Allah and His Messenger and honor him and respect him and exalt Him [i.e., Allah] morning and afternoon.*

*Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] - they are actually pledging allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands. So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised Allah - He will give him a great reward.”*

***“Indeed, We have sent you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] as a witness...”***

It is important to note that a witness can testify for or against someone. Muslims must therefore strive to sincerely obey and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that he testifies on their behalf on Judgement Day.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he is the first person to intercede and the first person whose intercession will be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

A muslim should therefore strive to make themselves worthy of the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by performing the actions which result in this such as supplicating for it after hearing the call to prayer. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 679. But this would require one to regularly attend the obligatory prayers at a Mosque instead of offering them at home. The greatest action which will result in the intercession is learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A muslim should not live in heedlessness by rejecting this duty and then expect intercession on Judgment Day as this is closer to wishful thinking which is blame worthy and of no real value compared to true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

Unfortunately, some muslims who have adopted this wishful thinking expect to obtain Paradise through this intercession even though they do not obey 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. These muslims must realise that even though the intercession is a fact some muslims who will have their punishment reduced through intercession will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

***“Indeed, We have sent you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] as a witness...”***

This could also mean he was sent as a witness to the testification of faith meaning, there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. The one who has also witnessed this after learning it from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, must fulfil its rights.

There are many Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which advise mankind that whoever testifies that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted, will be saved from the fire of Hell. One such example is found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128.

The meaning of these Hadiths is that whoever dies while believing in this testimony will either enter Paradise and escape Hell or they will enter Hell to the extent of their sins and then eventually be allowed into Paradise where they will dwell forever. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7510.

It is important to note, that those who desire to enter Paradise without entering Hell first must not only declare their belief in Islam verbally but they must also fulfil its conditions and obligations. The testimony of faith is

undoubtedly the key to Paradise but a key needs teeth in order to unlock a specific door. The teeth of the key to Paradise are its obligations and duties. Without them meaning, the key without its teeth, will not open the door to Paradise. This is proven through many Hadiths which indicate entry into Paradise requires one to fulfil the conditions and duties of Islam. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1397, indicates that the testimony must be supported by actions in the form of the pillars of Islam, such as establishing the obligatory prayers.

The first part of the testimony namely, there is none worthy of worship save Allah, the Exalted, means that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who must be obeyed and never disobeyed. When one accepts Allah, the Exalted, as their God they must not obey anything which leads to His disobedience as Allah, the Exalted, alone is their Master and they are only His slaves. But the moment one obeys anything which leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they have corrupted their belief in His Oneness which has been indicated in chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

*“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”*

The Holy Quran has warned muslims that whoever commits sins is in reality worshipping the Devil as they have obeyed him over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 36 Yaseen, verse 60:

*“Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam, that you not worship Satan - [for] indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”*

The muslims who reject their desires, the desires of others and the commands of the Devil and instead only obey Allah, the Exalted, have truly taken Allah, the Exalted, as their God. These muslims have been granted the protection of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These muslims have practically actualised the testimony of Islam as they supported their verbal and internal claim with sincere actions according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When one acts according to his traditions they have fulfilled the second aspect of the testimony namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted. These muslims are the ones referred to in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128. It advises they will be saved from the Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted.

The person who declares Islam with the tongue and internally accepts it is undoubtedly a muslim but their true sincere belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, is diminished according to their sins.

An aspect of truly acting on the testimony is sincerely loving Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has indicated this in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. It advises that this is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is when one loves what Allah, the Exalted, loves and hates what He hates. As this was the characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2333, muslims have been commanded to follow 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...”*

It is clear from Islamic teachings that loving what Allah, the Exalted, hates and disliking what Allah, the Exalted, loves is a clear indication of a person following their own desires and obeying them over Allah, the Exalted. This attitude reduces one's belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. The following verse makes it clear that adopting this mentality is a deviation from true belief in the testimony of Islam. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 24:

*“Say, [O Muhammad], "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.””*

The one who worships Allah, the Exalted, according to their own desires worships Him on the edge. Meaning, when they face times of ease they

become pleased but when they encounter difficulties they turn away from His obedience in anger. 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 Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, informs muslims how to correctly believe and act on the testimony of faith, which prevents one being harmed by the fire of Hell in the next world. This is to first complete the obligatory duties correctly while fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes. Then one must add to this by performing voluntary righteous deeds, the best of which are the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the love of Allah, the Exalted, and causes Allah, the Exalted, to empower every organ of their body so that they only obey Him. This true and sincere obedience is the fulfilment of the testimony of faith. This is the sound heart which contains only the love of Allah, the Exalted, and is free of worldly desires and the love of the material world. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

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

It is important to note, this does not mean a muslim becomes free from committing sins but it means they sincerely repent from them whenever they are rarely committed.

To conclude, it is vital for muslims to not only declare the testimony of Islam internally and verbally but they must also show it in their actions as this is the only way to achieve true success in this world and completely escape punishment in the next world also.

***“Indeed, We have sent you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] as...a bringer of good tidings and a warner.”***

This verse indicates the importance of implementing the teachings of Islam as reminders namely; glad tidings and warnings only benefit the person who acts on them. For example, those who ignore road hazard signs are often the ones who end up in dangerous situations. But those who act upon these hazards signs are protected from this danger. The glad tidings indicate the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon lead to the gardens of Paradise. And the warnings are the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon protects one from divine punishment such as Hell.

***“Indeed, We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. That you [people] may believe in Allāh...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“Indeed, We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. That you [people] may believe in Allāh...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in

Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“Indeed, We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. That you [people] may believe in Allāh...and exalt Him morning and afternoon.”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6407, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the difference between the person who remembers Allah, the Exalted, and the one who does not is like a living person compared to a dead person.

It is important for muslims who desire to create a strong connection with Allah, the Exalted, so that they can overcome all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter successfully to remember Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible. Put simply, the more they remember Him the more they will achieve this vital goal.

This is achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The second is by remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue. But the highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This is achieved 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. This requires one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds.

Those who remain on the first two levels will receive reward depending on their intention but they are unlikely to increase the strength of their faith and piety unless they move to the third and highest level of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

***“Indeed, We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. That you [people] may believe in Allāh...and exalt Him morning and afternoon.”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 574, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever establishes the two cool obligatory prayers will enter Paradise.

The two cool obligatory prayers refer to the dawn and late afternoon obligatory prayers as during these two times the weather is cooler than at other times meaning, before sunrise and before sunset.

Establishing the obligatory prayers includes fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes correctly according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as offering them on time. In fact, offering them as soon as they occur is one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252.

Even though, there are five obligatory prayers which must be established yet, only two have been mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion. This is because these two prayers are arguably the two hardest to establish. The obligatory dawn prayer occurs at a time when most people are asleep. Therefore, it requires much energy and motivation in order to leave one's comfortable bed in order to offer it correctly. The obligatory late afternoon prayer mostly occurs at a time where most people have completed their working day and have returned

home tired. So to leave one's relaxation after a tiring and even stressful day of work in order to correctly offer their obligatory prayer is difficult. Therefore, if one correctly establishes these two prayers they will through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, find it easier to establish the other obligatory prayers, which usually occur at more convenient times.

Muslims should therefore strive to establish all their obligatory prayers as it is the very essence of Islam and it in fact separates belief from disbelief. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618.

***“Indeed, We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. That you [people] may believe in Allāh and His Messenger and honor him and respect him...Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you - they are actually pledging allegiance to Allāh. The hand of Allāh is over their hands. So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised Allāh - He will give him a great reward.”***

If one desires to honour and respect the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they must fulfil the pledge they took when accepting Islam. This involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions 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 Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

***“Indeed, We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. That you [people] may believe in Allāh and His Messenger and honor him and respect him...Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you - they are actually pledging allegiance to Allāh. The hand of Allāh is over their hands. So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised Allāh - He will give him a great reward.”***

If one desires to honour and respect the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they must fulfil the pledge they took when accepting Islam. This involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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.

***“Indeed, We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. That you [people] may believe in Allāh and His Messenger and honor him and respect him...Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you - they are actually pledging allegiance to Allāh. The hand of Allāh is over their hands. So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised Allāh - He will give him a great reward.”***

If one desires to honour and respect the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they must fulfil the pledge they took when accepting Islam. This involves sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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.

***“...So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised Allāh - He will give him a great reward.”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that betraying trusts is an aspect of hypocrisy.

This includes all the trusts one possesses from Allah, the Exalted, and people. Every blessing one possesses has been entrusted to them by Allah, the Exalted. The only way to fulfill these trusts is by using the blessings in the way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they gain further blessings as this is true gratitude. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

The trusts between people are important to fulfill also. The one who has been entrusted with someone else's belongings should not misuse them and only use them according to the wishes of the owner. One of the greatest trusts between people is keeping conversations secret unless there is some obvious benefit in informing others. Unfortunately, this is often overlooked amongst Muslims.

***“...So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised Allāh - He will give him a great reward.”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that breaking promises is an aspect of hypocrisy.

The greatest of promises a muslim has made is with Allah, the Exalted, which is to obey Him sincerely. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. All other promises made with people must also be kept unless one has a valid excuse especially, the ones a parent makes with children. Breaking promises only teaches children bad character and encourages them to believe being deceitful is an acceptable characteristic to possess. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2227, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He will be against the one who makes a promise in His name and then breaks it without a valid excuse. How can the one who has Allah, the Exalted, against them on Judgment Day possibly succeed?

***“...So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised Allāh - He will give him a great reward.”***

Every muslim promised to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, when they accepted Islam as their faith.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For

example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“...So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised Allāh - He will give him a great reward.”***

Every muslim promised to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, when they accepted Islam as their faith.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces

the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“...So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised Allāh - He will give him a great reward.”***

Every muslim promised to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, when they accepted Islam as their faith.

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this

without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

***“Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you, - they are actually pledging allegiance to Allāh. The hand of Allāh is over their hands. So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised Allāh - He will give him a great reward.”***

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Uthman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, as his ambassador to the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in order to inform them of his peaceful intention. After Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, delivered this message he was detained by the non-Muslims of Mecca. News spread to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, had been martyred. He took a pledge from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, that they would not leave Mecca until they took revenge for Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, as he not only entered Mecca unarmed but as an ambassador of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ambassadors have always been treated with respect and harming them is a declaration of war. This is true even in this

day and age. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 227-228.

It is important for humanity to fulfill the pledge they made with Allah, the Exalted, which has been mentioned in chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

*"And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware.""*

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all Muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere 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.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a Muslim has a choice between pleasing Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows Muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for Muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments, enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person's heart indicates that it is a duty on Muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a Muslim. Certainty of faith allows a Muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

## Chapter 48 – Al Fath, Verses 11-12

سَيَقُولُ لَكَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ شَغَلَتْنَا أَمْوَالُنَا  
وَأَهْلُونَا فَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا يَقُولُونَ بِالسِّنْتِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي  
قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِنْ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ  
ضَرًّا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعًا بَلْ كَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١١﴾

بَلْ ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ لَنْ يَنْقَلِبَ الرَّسُولُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِيهِمْ  
أَبَدًا وَزِينَٰتِ ذَٰلِكَ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَظَنَنْتُمْ ظُرًّا السَّوْءِ  
وَكَنتُمْ قَوْمًا بُورًا ﴿١٢﴾

*“Those who remained behind of the bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say to you, “Our properties and our families occupied us, so ask forgiveness for us.” They say with their tongues what is not within their hearts. Say, “Then who could prevent Allah at all if He intended for you harm or intended for you benefit? Rather, ever is Allah, of what you do, Aware.”*

*But you thought that the Messenger and the believers would never return to their families, ever, and that was made pleasing in your hearts. And you assumed an assumption of evil and became a people ruined.”*

***“Those who remained behind of the bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say to you, “Our properties and our families occupied us...””***

When a muslim observes the teachings of Islam they will find that certain worldly blessings have been described in a positive way but in other places it has been described in a negative way. This is because in reality most things are not innately good or bad. What makes them good or bad is whether they take one towards the obedience and pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, or not. For example, the Holy Quran has described a spouse as a way of finding tranquillity, mercy and affection. Chapter 30 Ar Rum, verse 21:

*“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy...”*

But the same Holy Quran has also warned that a spouse and children can be enemies to a muslim as well. Chapter 64 At Taghabun, verse 14:

*“O you who have believed, indeed, among your spouses and your children are enemies to you, so beware of them...”*

This indicates that they become a source of tranquillity when they encourage one towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. But one's family can become an enemy to them if they divert them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

So muslims should regularly assess and judge the worldly blessings they possess in order to determine whether they encourage them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, or divert them from it. And if necessary take steps in order to benefit themselves in both worlds. Whoever does this self-assessment regularly during their lives will find that their final judgment on the Day of Resurrection will be easy as they remained obedient to Allah, the Exalted. But if they fail to do this self-assessment they will get lost in the material world and fail to prepare for the hereafter adequately which will lead to a difficult accountability and a potential severe punishment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 24:

*“Say, [O Muhammad], “If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command.”*

***“Those who remained behind of the bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say to you, “Our properties and our families occupied us...””***

It is important for muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the*

*patient." And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves."*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. 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."*

***“Those who remained behind of the bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say to you, “Our properties and our families occupied us...””***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that everything in this material world is cursed except the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, what is connected to it, the knowledgeable person and the student of knowledge.

The remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, encompasses all the levels of remembrance. Namely, internal silent remembrance, which includes correcting one’s intention so that they only act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Remembering Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue and the most important is practically remembering Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Anything which leads to the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, includes the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, such as striving in the material world in order to fulfill one's necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. In reality, this includes any action which appears worldly or religious as long as it involves the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

Both the knowledgeable person and the student of knowledge are the only people in reality who will obey Allah, the Exalted, correctly as this is not possible to achieve without knowledge. An ignorant person disobeys Allah, the Exalted, without even realizing it as they are unaware of what counts as a sin or a righteous deed. In some cases, one may even believe they are strictly obeying Him even though they are far from it.

To conclude, in reality nothing is really cursed in the material world in itself. It is how a thing is used which determines if it is cursed or not. For example, if wealth is used correctly according to the teachings of Islam then it is a great blessing in both worlds. But if it is misused or hoarded then it will become a curse for its owner in both worlds. This can be applied to all things in this world.

***“Those who remained behind of the bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say to you, "Our properties and our families occupied us..."”***

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.

***“Those who remained behind of the bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say to you, “Our properties and our families occupied us...””***

One can adopt the correct attitude when they understand the purpose of the blessings they were granted.

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.

***“Those who remained behind of the bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say to you, “Our properties and our families occupied us...””***

There are countless examples in the world of how a person inspired their friend to take the wrong path in life which caused them serious trouble, such as prison. One should not only be cautious of people who possess bad characteristics as they will influence their friends in a negative way which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. But a muslim should also be cautious over the people who seem to possess genuine love for them especially those who do not possess real knowledge. This is because the one who does not possess real knowledge will sometimes advise their loved ones incorrectly believing they have fulfilled and shown their love to their companion. For example, a wife may advise her tired husband to offer his obligatory prayer at home instead of at the Mosque with congregation. Even though according to some scholars it is permissible to offer one's obligatory prayer at home yet, this advice will only take one away from one of the greatest traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn will only take them further away from Allah, the Exalted. This wife may believe she has behaved in a loving way even though she has not. This is why gaining useful knowledge is extremely important and a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. This is because some things may seem difficult outwardly yet many blessings are contained within them. And many things may seem easy and even lawful yet they only take one away from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a muslim should be cautious and remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and not get fooled by the advice a loved one gives. They should not assume the advice will benefit them just because it comes from a beloved companion.

***“Those who remained behind of the bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say to you, “Our properties and our families occupied us, so ask forgiveness for us.” They say with their tongues what is not within their hearts...”***

If they were sincere in their repentance they would have been forgiven.

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.

***“Those who remained behind of the bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say to you, “Our properties and our families occupied us, so ask forgiveness for us.” They say with their tongues what is not within their hearts...”***

A sign of hypocrisy is being two-faced. This is the one who changes their behaviour in order to please different groups of people intending thereby to gain some worldly things. They speak with many different tongues showing their support to different people while harbouring dislike for them. They fail to be sincere towards people which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. If they fail to repent they will find themselves in the hereafter with two tongues of fire. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4873. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 14:

*“When they meet the believers, they say: “We believe,” but when they meet their evil companions (in privacy), they say: “Surely we are with you; we were merely jesting.””*

***“Those who remained behind of the bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say to you, “Our properties and our families occupied us, so ask forgiveness for us.” They say with their tongues what is not within their hearts...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that lying is an aspect of hypocrisy. Lying is unacceptable whether it is a small lie which is often called a white lie or when one lies as a joke. All of these types of lying are forbidden. In fact, the one who lies to make people laugh, so their aim is not to deceive someone, has been cursed three times in one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315.

Another popular lie people often speak believing it is not a sin is when they lie to children. This is undoubtedly a sin according to Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4991. It is plain foolishness to lie to children as they will only adopt this sinful habit from the elder who lies to them. Behaving in this manner shows children lying is acceptable when it is not acceptable according to the teachings of Islam. Only in very rare and extreme cases is lying acceptable for example, lying in order to protect the life of an innocent person.

It is vital to avoid lying as according to one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, it leads to other sins such as, backbiting and mocking people. This behaviour leads one to the gates of Hell. When a person continues to lie they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great

liar. It does not take a scholar to predict what will happen to a person on Judgment day who has been recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great liar.

All muslims desire the company of the Angels. Yet, when a person lies they are deprived of their company. In fact, the stench that is omitted from the mouth of a liar causes the Angels to move a mile away from them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1972.

***“Those who remained behind of the bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say to you, “Our properties and our families occupied us, so ask forgiveness for us.” They say with their tongues what is not within their hearts...But you thought that the Messenger and the believers would never return to their families, ever, and that was made pleasing in your hearts. And you assumed an assumption of evil and became a people ruined.”***

Their attitude was a clear sign of their insincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One must avoid this attitude by sincerely obeying and following him at all times.

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.

***“Those who remained behind of the bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say to you, "Our properties and our families occupied us, so ask forgiveness for us." They say with their tongues what is not within their hearts...But you thought that...the believers would never return to their families, ever, and that was made pleasing in your hearts. And you assumed an assumption of evil and became a people ruined.”***

Their attitude was a clear sign of their insincerity towards the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. One must avoid this attitude as it contradicts belief.

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...”*

***“Those who remained behind of the bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say to you, “Our properties and our families occupied us, so ask forgiveness for us.” They say with their tongues what is not within their hearts...But you thought that...the believers would never return to their families, ever, and that was made pleasing in your hearts. And you assumed an assumption of evil and became a people ruined.”***

Their attitude was a clear sign of their insincerity towards the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. One must avoid this attitude as it contradicts belief.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13, that a person cannot become a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This does not mean a muslim will lose their faith if they fail to adopt this characteristic. It means that a muslim’s faith will not be complete until they act on this advice. This Hadith also indicates that a muslim will not perfect their faith until they also dislike for others what they dislike for themselves. This is supported by another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586. It advises that the muslim nation is like one body. If one part of the body is in pain the rest of the body shares the pain. This mutual feeling includes loving and hating for others what one loves and hates for themselves.

A muslim can only achieve this status when their heart is free from evil traits, such as envy. These evil traits will always cause one to desire better for themselves. So in reality, this Hadith is an indication that one should purify their heart by adopting good characteristics, such as being forgiving, and eliminate evil traits, such as envy. This is only possible through learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for muslims to understand that desiring good for others will cause them to lose out on good things. The treasury of Allah, the Exalted, has no limits so there is no need to adopt a selfish and greedy mentality.

Desiring good for others includes striving to aid others in anyway one can, such as financial or emotional support, in the same way a person would desire others to aid them in their moment of need. Therefore, this love must be shown through actions not just words. Even when a muslim forbids evil and offers advice which contradicts the desire of others they should do so gently just like they would want others to advise them kindly.

As mentioned earlier, the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of eliminating all bad characteristics which contradict mutual love and care, such as envy. Envy is when a person desires to possess a specific blessing which is only obtainable when it is taken away from someone else. This attitude is a direct challenge to the distribution of blessings chosen by Allah, the Exalted. This is why it is a major sin and

leads to the destruction of the envier's good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903. If a Muslim must desire the lawful things others possess they should wish and supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, to grant them the same or similar thing without the other person losing the blessing. This type of jealousy is lawful and is praiseworthy in aspects of religion. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that muslims should only be jealous of a wealthy person who uses their wealth correctly. And be jealous of a knowledgeable person who uses their knowledge to benefit themselves and others.

A Muslim should not only love for others to obtain lawful worldly blessings but also for them to gain religious blessings in both worlds. In fact, when one wishes this for others it encourages them to strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This type of healthy competition is welcomed in Islam. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 26:

*“...So for this let the competitors compete.”*

This encouragement will also inspire a muslim to assess themselves in order to find and eliminate any faults in their character. When these two elements combine meaning, striving in sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and purifying one's character, it leads to success in both worlds.

A Muslim must therefore not only claim to love for others what they desire for themselves verbally but show it through their actions. It is hoped that the one who is concerned for others in this way will receive the concern of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930.

***“...Say, "Then who could prevent Allāh at all if He intended for you harm or intended for you benefit?..."”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who decrees harm and benefit. Allah, the Exalted, decrees harm to those who remain steadfast on persistent disobedience. But even in this harm there is much good such as wiping away one's sins before reaching Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6561.

A muslim who understands this divine name will strive to receive benefits from Allah, the Exalted, and avoid harm through sincere obedience.

A muslim must act on this divine name by keeping their harm away from others and only provide them with benefits according to their means. This in fact is the characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

***“...Say, "Then who could prevent Allāh at all if He intended for you harm or intended for you benefit?...””***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, there are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But there are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

***“Say, "Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...””***

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He

deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

***“...Rather, ever is Allāh, of what you do, 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.

***“...And you assumed an assumption of evil and became a people ruined.”***

Generally speaking, it is important for muslims to avoid a particular negative mentality which is mentioned in chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

*“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”*

Unfortunately, adopting this negative mind-set effects people from a family unit to a national level. First of all, interpreting things in a negative way often leads to sins, such as backbiting and slandering. In all cases, a muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. For example, how many times has a nation gone to war over an assumption and suspicion? The vast majority of scandals which are found in the media are based on assumptions. Even laws have been created which support the use of assumptions and suspicion. This often leads to fractured and broken relationships as people with this mind-set always believe others are taking a dig at them through their words or actions. This prevents one from taking advice from others as they believe they are only being mocked by the one giving advice. And it prevents one from giving advice as they believe the other person will not pay any attention to what they say. And a person will refrain from advising the one who possesses this negative mind-set as they believe it will only lead to an argument. This leads to other negative traits, such as bitterness. It is important for muslims to accept any good advice they are given even if they assume someone is taking a dig at them. They should strive to

interpret things, where possible, in a positive way which leads to a positive mentality.

Chapter 48 – Al Fath, Verse 13

وَمَنْ لَّمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَعِيرًا



*“And whoever has not believed in Allah and His Messenger - then indeed,  
We have prepared for the disbelievers a Blaze.”*

***“And whoever has not believed in Allah and His Messenger...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran and to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never

burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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 Muhammad], "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 whoever has not believed in Allah and His Messenger...”***

True belief involves practically obeying Allah, the Exalted, and the His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“And whoever has not believed in Allāh and His Messenger - then indeed, We have prepared for the disbelievers a Blaze.”***

True belief involves practically obeying Allah, the Exalted, and the His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a muslim is in danger of dying as a non-muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

*“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”*

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

***“And whoever has not believed in Allāh and His Messenger - then indeed, We have prepared for the disbelievers a Blaze.”***

The Holy Quran clearly declared the purpose of mankind in chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

*“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”*

Before one can worship Allah, the Exalted, they must first recognise Him as it is not possible to obey someone without knowledge. In addition, people must first learn how to worship Allah, the Exalted, before they can fulfil this task. Therefore, worship is followed by knowledge. This is why in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared seeking useful knowledge a duty on all muslims. Without knowledge one will never be able to worship Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Few good deeds performed with knowledge are far superior to many good deeds performed incorrectly because of ignorance.

As Allah, the Exalted, is the One who created mankind no one has the right to be served and worshipped except Him. If an employer easily dismisses their employee for abandoning the duty they have been hired for, how can it be correct to abandon serving and worshipping Allah, the Exalted, when He alone created and sustains the creation? All of mankind have been

granted free will and the ability to obey and worship Allah, the Exalted. So each person must decide whether they desire to fulfil their purpose of creation thereby receiving eternal reward or reject it and face punishment in both worlds. The same way a device, such as a mobile phone, which does not fulfil its primary purpose is discarded people may well be discarded on the Day of Judgement into Hell for failing to fulfil their primary purpose of existence.

It is important to note, that worship refers to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves 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. This obedience must encompass every part of one's life and body, such as their tongue. It includes a person's duty towards Allah, the Exalted, such as offering the prayer and treating the creation with kindness.

Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will be given the best rewards while those who disobey Him will receive the worst punishment in this world and the next. In a divine Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2466, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, narrates from Allah, the Exalted, who declares that if one busies themselves in worshipping Him, through sincere obedience, He will fill their heart with richness and remove their poverty. But if they turn away from His worship and obedience Allah, the Exalted, will fill their life with problems and not remove their poverty.

It is important to note, that Allah, the Exalted, does not need the creation in anyway whatsoever. As clearly mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6572, people only benefit themselves with their good deeds as it raises their ranks. And they only harm themselves with their sins as they will be held accountable for them. The infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, does not change at all irrespective of if the entire creation worshipped Him or not. Allah, the Exalted, is the sole Creator and sole Provider. It is people who are completely and utterly in need of Him. Whoever understands this and sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the purpose of their creation and will therefore be given an eternal reward.

***“And whoever has not believed in Allāh and His Messenger - then indeed, We have prepared for the disbelievers a Blaze.”***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of

righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

Chapter 48 – Al Fath, Verse 14

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن  
يَشَاءُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا



*“And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who possesses all sovereignty which is free of all defects. It is a sovereignty which has no beginning, no end, no reduction and no limit. Allah, the Exalted, has complete and total control over the creation through management and judgment without any limitations, partners or helpers. The King cannot be hindered or prevented from carrying out His will.

By accepting Allah, the Exalted, as the only King a muslim indirectly accepts their servanthood to Him. Therefore, they must fulfil all His commands and avoid all His prohibitions. A true servant never questions the wise decisions of the King and instead submits with full trust to His choices knowing that the wise King only decrees the best for His servant. 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.”*

When a muslim recognises Allah, the Exalted, as the King they will not turn to another when seeking help and instead only seek His support through sincere obedience to Him. They will always remember if they obey the King He will protect them from the creation. But if they obey the creation over Allah, the Exalted, the creation will not be able to protect them from the

punishment of the only King. This is indicated in a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. He declared that there is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator.

A muslim should adopt this characteristic according to their status by purifying their inner spiritual king namely, the spiritual heart through acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will cause their servants meaning, their bodily limbs, to obey their spiritual heart in acts of righteousness. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that if the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body will be pure but if the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body will become corrupt. One should not become a slave of their evil desires and instead become a true king which controls their desires according to the teachings of Islam.

Whoever perfects this will be given a spiritual kingdom in both worlds. The ultimate destination of the one who fulfils the rights of the King by perfecting servanthood has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. They will be granted a high station in the presence of the only Omnipotent King. Chapter 54 Al Qamar, verse 55:

*“In a seat of honour near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”*

***“...He forgives whom He wills...And ever is Allāh Forgiving...”***

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“...and punishes whom He wills...”***

Allah, the Exalted, takes revenge on those who oppress His weak servants as they do not possess the power to defend nor avenge themselves.

A muslim who understands this divine name will not oppress the servants of Allah, the Exalted, especially those who appear defenceless as in reality their Protector and Avenger is Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, will take revenge for His servants during their lives on Earth and especially on Judgement Day. He will establish justice by forcing the oppressor to hand over their righteous deeds to their victim and if necessary, the victim's sins will be shifted to their oppressor. This may well cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

A muslim must act on this divine name by taking revenge against their own inner Devil which inspires them towards evil by subjecting it to the strict obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. And a muslim must seek revenge on all things which prevent them from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by turning away from them.

***“...and punishes whom He wills...”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“...And ever is Allāh...Merciful.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Most Merciful according to His infinite status. This attribute means that Allah, the Exalted, bestows countless favours on the creation and is always extremely kind to them. This same characteristic has been attributed to others such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 128:

*“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you [i.e., your guidance] and to the believers is kind and merciful.”*

When used in reference to the creation merciful means soft-hearted and compassionate. A muslim must adopt these qualities by looking at the creation through the eye of mercy and by treating them with mercy and compassion whether they are obedient or sinful. Many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 6030, indicate that the one who does not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. So it is vital for muslims to show mercy to all through their actions such as financial and physical help and through their words such as supplicating for them. Islam in fact rewards a muslim who shows mercy to all living things such as animals. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550. In addition, the mercy they show should not be selective or occasional instead they should strive to demonstrate mercy at all times with all of creation.

***“...He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills. And ever is Allāh Forgiving and Merciful.”***

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that Allah, the Exalted, acts and treats His servant according to their perception of Him. This means if a muslim has good thoughts and expects good from Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will not disappoint them. Similarly, if a person harbours negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, such as believing they will not be forgiven then Allah, the Exalted, may act according to their belief.

It is important to note, there is a vast difference between true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which this Hadith refers to and wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is when one fails to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them. This is not true hope it is merely wishful thinking. This is like a farmer who fails to plant any seeds, fails to water their crop and still hopes to reap a large harvest. True hope is when one strives to obey Allah, the Exalted, and whenever they slip up they sincerely repent and then hope for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. This is like a farmer who plants seeds, waters their crop, dedicates effort to keeping the crop healthy and then hopes for a large harvest. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has summarised this explanation in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Generally speaking, a muslim should harbour more fear of Allah, the Exalted, during their life as it prevents sins which is superior to hope which inspires one to perform righteous deeds especially, the voluntary type. But during periods of illness and difficulty and especially at the time of death a muslim should have nothing but hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, even if they have spent their life disobeying Him as this has specifically been commanded by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2877. This has also been indicated at the end of the verse under discussion.

Chapter 48 – Al Fath, Verses 15-17

سَيَقُولُ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ إِذَا انْطَلَقْتُمْ إِلَى مَغَانِمَ  
لِتَأْخُذُوهَا ذَرُونَا نَتَّبِعْكُمْ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُبَدِّلُوا كَلِمَ اللَّهِ  
قُلْ لَنْ تَتَّبِعُونَا كَذَلِكَ قَالِ اللَّهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَسَيَقُولُونَ  
بَلْ تَحْسُدُونَنَا بَلْ كَانُوا لَا يَفْقَهُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٥﴾

قُلْ لِلْمُخَلَّفِينَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ سَتُدْعُونَ إِلَى قَوْمٍ أُولِي بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ  
نُقِنَلُونَهُمْ أَوْ يُسَلِّمُونَ فَإِنْ تَطِيعُوا يُؤْتِكُمُ اللَّهُ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا  
وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا كَمَا تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٦﴾

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرْجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرْجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ  
حَرْجٌ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا  
الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ يُعَذِّبْهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٧﴾

“Those who remained behind [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say when you set out toward the war booty to take it, "Let us follow you." They wish to change the words of Allah. Say, "Never will you

*follow us. Thus did Allah say before." So they will say, "Rather, you envy us." But [in fact] they were not understanding except a little.*

*Say to those who remained behind of the Bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya], "You will be called to [face] a people of great military might; you may fight them, or they will submit. So if you obey, Allah will give you a good reward; but if you turn away as you turned away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment."*

*There is not upon the blind any guilt or upon the lame any guilt or upon the ill any guilt [for remaining behind]. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger - He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow; but whoever turns away - He will punish him with a painful punishment."*

***“Those who remained behind [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say when you set out toward the war booty to take it, “Let us follow you.” They wish to change the words of Allāh. Say, “Never will you follow us. Thus did Allāh say before.”...”***

Those who remained behind from accompanying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in performing the Visitation, Umra, which eventually became the Pact of Hudaibiya, desired to join him for the expedition against the non-muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar, close to Medina. This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 9, Page 144.

They were happy to accompany him in matters which led to worldly gain but refrained from supporting him in matters which did not lead to worldly gain.

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. When reaching their forts he declared that the next day he was going to give his banner to someone who loved Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and that this man was also a beloved of Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He concluded that this man

would conquer Khaybar. The next day he called for Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, and entrusted him with the banner and Khaybar was then conquered. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 251.

It is important for muslims to recognize why their worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. 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 disobedience]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”*

As they obey Allah, the Exalted, in order to receive worldly blessings the moment they fail to receive them or encounter a difficulty they often become angered which turns them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. These people often obey and disobey Allah, the Exalted, according to the situation they are facing which in reality contradicts true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though, desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, is acceptable in Islam yet, if one persists with this attitude they may become like those mentioned in this verse. It is far better to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to be saved in the hereafter and obtain Paradise. This person is unlikely to alter their behaviour when encountering difficulties. But the highest and best reason is to obey Allah, the Exalted, simply because He is their Lord and the Lord of the universe. This muslim, if sincere, will remain steadfast in all situations and through this obedience they will be granted both worldly and religious blessings which outstrip the worldly blessings the first type of person would ever receive.

To conclude, it is important for muslims to reflect on their intention and if necessary correct it so that it encourages them to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in all situations.

***“Those who remained behind [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya] will say when you set out toward the war booty to take it, “Let us follow you.” They wish to change the words of Allāh. Say, “Never will you follow us. Thus did Allāh say before.” So they will say, “Rather, you envy us.” But [in fact] they were not understanding except a little.”***

Those who remained behind from accompanying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in performing the Visitation, Umra, which eventually became the Pact of Hudaibiya, desired to join him for the expedition against the non-muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar, close to Medina. This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 9, Page 144.

They were happy to accompany him in matters which led to worldly gain but refrained from supporting him in matters which did not lead to worldly gain.

A Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5023, warns that a sign of hypocrisy is insulting others especially, when they disagree with them. When speaking to others a muslim should never use foul and sinful language. It is important to remember that it only takes a single sinful word to cause a person to plummet into Hell on Judgement Day. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. A muslim should adhere to the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by replying evil words with kind words or they

should simply remain silent and ignore the person who utters foul language.

In addition, it was their greed for worldly things which encouraged them adopt this cherry picking mentality.

An aspect of hypocrisy is greed. Their extreme greed places them far from Allah, the Exalted, far from the people and close to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961. They dislike when others donate charity as their greed becomes manifest to others. They also put people off from donating charity as they dislike society labelling others as generous. So they always try to put people off from donating charity with poor reasons such as labelling charities as con artists. These people should be ignored as Allah, the Exalted, judges people on their intention which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. So even if their donated wealth does not reach the poor as long as a person donates through a trustworthy well known charity they will receive their reward according to their intention. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 67:

*“The hypocrite men and hypocrite women are of one another. They enjoin what is wrong and forbid what is right and close their hands...”*

***“Say to those who remained behind of the Bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya], “You will be called to [face] a people of great military might; you may fight them, or they will submit...””***

Even after behaving hypocritically and failing to support the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Allah, the Exalted, gave them chance after chance to sincerely repent and adopt true belief.

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

***“Say to those who remained behind of the Bedouins [from the journey that led to the pact of Hudaibiya], “You will be called to [face] a people of great military might; you may fight them, or they will submit. So if you obey, Allāh will give you a good reward; but if you turn away as you turned away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment.””***

This could be referring to the Battle of Tabuk or the other battles the Muslims were called to fight in. This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 9, Page 146.

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to firstly preach Islam and if necessary fight against the great Byzantine empire. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to make preparations for the Battle of Tabuk during a period of extreme heat and discomfort. In addition, the journey would be long and extremely difficult. A total of 30,000 soldiers joined him for this expedition but some held back out of negligence or hypocrisy. Allah, the Exalted, revealed many verses of the Holy Quran criticizing them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 1.

In life a Muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition

are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties than when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed, such as this one, involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a Muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

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.”*

***“...So if you obey, Allāh will give you a good reward; but if you turn away as you turned away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment. There is not upon the blind any guilt or upon the lame any guilt or upon the ill any guilt [for remaining behind]. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger - He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow; but whoever turns away - He will punish him with a painful punishment.”***

True obedience involves sincerity. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

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 Allah, the Exalted, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran and to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the

three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

***“...So if you obey, Allāh will give you a good reward; but if you turn away as you turned away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment. There is not upon the blind any guilt or upon the lame any guilt or upon the ill any guilt [for remaining behind]. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger - He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow; but whoever turns away - He will punish him with a painful punishment.”***

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to

the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“...So if you obey, Allāh will give you a good reward; but if you turn away as you turned away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment. There is not upon the blind any guilt or upon the lame any guilt or upon the ill any guilt [for remaining behind]. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger - He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow; but whoever turns away - He will punish him with a painful punishment.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the

more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“...So if you obey, Allāh will give you a good reward; but if you turn away as you turned away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment. There is not upon the blind any guilt or upon the lame any guilt or upon the ill any guilt [for remaining behind]. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger - He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow; but whoever turns away - He will punish him with a painful punishment.”***

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and

looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“...So if you obey, Allāh will give you a good reward; but if you turn away as you turned away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment. There is not upon the blind any guilt or upon the lame any guilt or upon the ill any guilt [for remaining behind]. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger - He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow; but whoever turns away - He will punish him with a painful punishment.”***

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually

disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“...So if you obey, Allāh will give you a good reward; but if you turn away as you turned away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment. There is not upon the blind any guilt or upon the lame any guilt or upon the ill any guilt [for remaining behind]. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger - He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow; but whoever turns away - He will punish him with a painful punishment.”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and

incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“...So if you obey, Allāh will give you a good reward; but if you turn away as you turned away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment. There is not upon the blind any guilt or upon the lame any guilt or upon the ill any guilt [for remaining behind]. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger - He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow; but whoever turns away - He will punish him with a painful punishment.”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“...So if you obey, Allāh will give you a good reward; but if you turn away as you turned away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment. There is not upon the blind any guilt or upon the lame any guilt or upon the ill any guilt [for remaining behind]. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger - He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow; but whoever turns away - He will punish him with a painful punishment.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“...So if you obey, Allāh will give you a good reward; but if you turn away as you turned away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment. There is not upon the blind any guilt or upon the lame any guilt or upon the ill any guilt [for remaining behind]. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger - He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow; but whoever turns away - He will punish him with a painful punishment.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“...And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger - He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow; but whoever turns away - He will punish him with a painful punishment.”***

It is important to understand that the prohibitions and commands of Allah, the Exalted, do not exist to make people's life harder. They only exist in order to benefit people in both this world and in the next even if these benefits are not apparent to people. For example, the negative effects of alcohol, which science has proven, was not always apparent such as its negative effect on the organs of the body. It only became unlawful in Islam to protect people from this and other harms. In addition, It is an aspect of faith to accept something without understanding its wisdoms. If all the wisdoms of the commands and prohibitions were made apparent then it would not allow muslims to possess complete faith. Allah, the Exalted, does not benefit from these commands and prohibitions only people do.

***“...And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger - He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow; but whoever turns away - He will punish him with a painful punishment.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2559, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Paradise is surrounded by hardships and Hell is surrounded by desires.

This means the path which leads to Paradise contains difficulties and hardships. In most cases, a person cannot obtain good in this world without going through some sort of difficulty, such as exerting one's energy, then how can one believe they can obtain Paradise without facing difficulties? If one turns the pages of history they will observe the righteous always faced difficulties but as they knew the path of Paradise contained difficulties they maintained their focus on the destination instead of the difficulties. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that no one had been tested more than him in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472. Therefore, muslims must realize a fact that facing some difficulties in this world is an extremely small price to pay to obtain the permanent bliss of Paradise. Therefore, they should remain patient through all difficulties while focusing on the destination.

The path to Hell is full of desires. This indicates the importance of maintaining one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, at all times by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Even though it is not unlawful to enjoy lawful pleasures in this world a muslim should minimize these as much as possible as these lawful

desires often lead to unlawful desires. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who behaves in such a manner will safe guard their faith and honor. A muslim should never obey their desires or the desires of others if it means they will disobey Allah, the Exalted, as the pleasure of fulfilling desires vanishes quickly whereas the regret and the potential punishment will last long.

To conclude, a desire fulfilled will not make one feel better if they end up in Hell. And a difficulty one faces will not make them feel bad if they end up in Paradise.

Chapter 48 – Al Fath, Verses 18-21

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ  
الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَبَهُمْ  
فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا ﴿١٨﴾

وَمَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً يَأْخُذُونَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٩﴾

وَعَدَكُمْ اللَّهُ مَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً تَأْخُذُونَهَا فَعَجَّلَ لَكُمْ هَذِهِ  
وَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَ النَّاسِ عَنْكُمْ وَلِتَكُونَ آيَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ  
صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ﴿٢٠﴾

وَأُخْرَى لَمْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهَا قَدْ أَحَاطَ اللَّهُ بِهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى  
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا ﴿٢١﴾

*“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged  
allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him],*

*under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest.*

*And much war booty which they will take. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise.*

*Allah has promised you much booty that you will take [in the future] and has hastened for you this [victory] and withheld the hands of people from you - that it may be a sign for the believers and [that] He may guide you to a straight path.*

*And [He promises] other [victories] that you were [so far] unable to [realize] which Allah has already encompassed. And ever is Allah, over all things, competent.”*

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never

burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...”***

True allegiance involves sincerity.

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.

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...”***

True allegiance involves practical obedience.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and

incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts...”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that those who perform deeds for the sake of people, such as showing off, instead of doing them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, will be told to gain their reward on Judgment Day from the people they acted for which in reality is not possible to do.

It is important to understand that the foundation of all deeds and even Islam itself is one’s intention. It is the very thing which Allah, the Exalted, judges people on according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A muslim should ensure they perform all religious and useful worldly actions for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward from Him in both worlds. A sign of this correct mentality is that this person neither expects nor desires people to appreciate or show gratitude to them for the deeds they perform. If one desires this then it indicates their incorrect intention.

In addition, acting with the correct intention prevents sadness and bitterness as the one who acts for the sake of people will eventually encounter ungrateful people who will make them annoyed and bitter as they feel they wasted their effort and time. Unfortunately, this is seen in parents and relatives as they often fulfill their duties towards their children and relatives for their sake instead of for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. But the one who acts for the sake of Allah, the exalted, will fulfill all their

duties towards others such as their children and never become bitter or enraged when they fail to show gratitude towards them. This attitude leads to peace of mind and general happiness as they know Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their righteous deed and will reward them for it. This is the way all muslims must act otherwise they may well be left empty handed on the Day of Judgment.

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them...”***

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Uthman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, as his ambassador to the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in order to inform them of his peaceful intention. After Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, delivered this message he was detained by the non-Muslims of Mecca. News spread to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, had been martyred. He took a pledge from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, that they would not leave Mecca until they took revenge for Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, as he not only entered Mecca unarmed but as an ambassador of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ambassadors have always been treated with respect and harming them is a declaration of war. This is true even in this day and age. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 227-228.

It is important for humanity to fulfill the pledge they made with Allah, the Exalted, which has been mentioned in chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

*“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware.””*

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all Muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere 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.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a Muslim has a choice between pleasing

Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows Muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for Muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments, enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person's heart indicates that it is a duty on Muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a Muslim. Certainty of faith allows a Muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them...”***

This verse indicates that when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will obtain peace in both worlds.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and

effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them...”***

This verse indicates that when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will obtain peace in both worlds.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them...”***

This verse indicates that when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will obtain peace in both worlds.

It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

*“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”*

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them...”***

This verse indicates that when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will obtain peace in both worlds.

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has

been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them...”***

This verse indicates that when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will obtain peace in both worlds.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted

this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest. And much war booty which they will take...Allāh has promised you much booty that you will take [in the future] and has hastened for you this [victory]...”***

The imminent conquest and spoils of war refers to the Battle of Khaybar, which took place shortly after the Pact of Hudaibiya.

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. When reaching their forts he declared that the next day he was going to give his banner to someone who loved Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and that this man was also a beloved of Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He concluded that this man would conquer Khaybar. The next day he called for Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, and entrusted him with the banner and Khaybar was then conquered. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 251.

Even though the number of muslims have increased over time it is obvious that the strength of muslims has only decreased. Each muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith believes in the authenticity of the Holy Quran as doubting it would cause them to lose their faith. In the following verse Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to obtaining superiority and success which would remove the weakness and grief muslims are experiencing all around the world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

*“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”*

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that muslims only need to become true believers in order to achieve this superiority and success in both worlds. True belief involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and those towards people, such as loving for others what one loves for themselves which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This requires one to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Through this attitude was success and superiority granted to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And if muslims desire to achieve it then they must return to this rightly guided attitude. As muslims believe in the Holy Quran they should understand this simple teaching and act on it.

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest. And much war booty which they will take...Allāh has promised you much booty that you will take [in the future] and has hastened for you this [victory] and withheld the hands of people from you - that it may be a sign for the believers and [that] He may guide you to a straight path.”***

The imminent conquest and spoils of war refers to the Battle of Khaybar, which took place shortly after the Pact of Hudaibiya. As indicated by the end of these verses, not much fighting took place and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was granted a relatively easy victory.

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. The non-Muslims of Khaybar took refuge in one of their forts and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took control of their farmlands. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired to expel them from his territory they struck a deal with him. They would take care of the farmlands and hand over half the harvest to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on the condition that they were not to be expelled from the land. The Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, agreed and deputized a Companion, Abdullah Bin Rawaha, may Allah be pleased with him, to visit them each year and take their payment. These non-Muslims tried to bribe Abdullah Bin Rawaha, may Allah be pleased with him, so that he would allow them to keep more than the half which was agreed upon. He replied that even though no one on Earth was more dearer to him than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and they, the non-Muslims, were most disliked by him, he would not let the love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, nor his dislike for them prevent him from treating them fairly and doing justice. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 270-271.

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who guides His servants to what is beneficial for them in both worlds and guides them away from anything which harms them. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verse 8:

*“And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness.”*

The muslim who understands this divine name will seek guidance in worldly and religious matters from none other than Allah, the Exalted, through the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever seeks guidance from anything else will not find lasting success.

A muslim should act on this divine name by guiding others towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and what is beneficial to them in both worldly and religious matters according to their knowledge. This will ensure they become a true believer meaning, the one who loves for others what they desire for themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest. And much war booty which they will take...Allāh has promised you much booty that you will take [in the future] and has hastened for you this [victory] and withheld the hands of people from you - that it may be a sign for the believers and [that] He may guide you to a straight path.”***

Withholding the hands of the people could also be referring to the Pact of Hudaibiya itself, which allowed the Muslims to openly and easily preach Islam without any fear or distractions.

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace

with him but set some conditions all of which seemed to outwardly favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. After the pact was signed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, returned to Medina without performing the Visitation (Umra), which was part of the pact. This pact of peace for ten years in reality favored the Muslims. Prior to this pact whenever Muslims and non-Muslims met it often led to some sort of fighting but when warfare came to an end because of the pact whenever these people met they only conversed. When Islam was explained to the non-Muslims they began to accept it. Islam entered the hearts of more people in the next two years than it did in all the previous years since its coming. This clear victory was acknowledged by Allah, the Exalted, who revealed chapter 48 Al Fath after the agreement had been signed. Chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 1:

*“Indeed, We have given you, a clear conquest”*

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 231.

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest. And much war booty which they will take...Allāh has promised you much booty that you will take [in the future] and has hastened for you this [victory] and withheld the hands of people from you - that it may be a sign for the believers and [that] He may guide you to a straight path.”***

A major sign Allah, the Exalted, showed the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, was that when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, He will grant them peace and success in both worlds, even if it seems impossible.

Therefore, this event teaches muslims that whenever they encounter a difficult situation they should remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, trusting that He will provide them a way out of it even if this seems impossible at the time. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

***“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”***

A muslim should understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best for His servants even if the wisdoms behind the difficulty are not obvious. It is

a person's reaction which either leads to blessings or the anger of Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to reflect on the countless examples in their own life where they believed something was bad only to change their mind later on and vice versa. This is just like when a person takes a bitter medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. Even though the medicine is bitter they still take it believing it will benefit them. It is strange how a muslim can trust a doctor whose knowledge is limited and who is not absolutely certain the bitter medicine will benefit them and fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge is infinite and when He only decrees the best for His servants.

A muslim should understand the difference between wishful thinking and trust in Allah, the Exalted. The person who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, and then expects Him to help them in difficulties is a wishful thinker. The one who will gain the help of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated in this great event, is the one who sincerely strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience and then trusts His judgment without complaining or questioning His choice.

***“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest...And [He promises] other [victories] that you were [so far] unable to [realize] which Allāh has already encompassed. And ever is Allāh, over all things, competent.”***

The final part of these verses could be referring to the Conquest of Mecca, as well as other victories, which at the time, during the Pact of Hudaibiya, seemed like an extremely difficult objective.

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a leader of Mecca became astonished at their power and number. He commented that he saw many faces he did not recognize who had come to conquer Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that this was only a consequence of the actions of the non-Muslims. The Muslim army believed in him when the non-Muslims of Mecca called him a liar and they assisted him when the non-Muslims of Mecca exiled him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 393.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, there are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But there are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

*“Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”*

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe

that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

***“...And ever is Allāh Exalted in Might...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who over powers all things, who in reality is the only One who possesses power and might. Anyone else who possesses strength only does so because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. There is no atom in this world or in the next that can escape the power and authority of Allah, the Exalted.

As all power belongs to Allah, the Exalted, a muslim should therefore always remember that the strength to perform righteous deeds and refrain from sins comes from Allah, the Exalted, alone. This will remove any chance of pride creeping into their heart. An atom's worth of which is enough to take a person to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Whoever desires for their faith to become mighty must obey the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be granted strong faith which will aid them to overcome all difficulties so that they leave this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. True obedience only lies in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. 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.”*

Truly Knowing Allah, the Exalted, is All Mighty should prevent a muslim from sinning. As they should know there is no way to escape the might of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, when a muslim engraves this divine name into their heart it prevents them from committing oppression and wronging others. They become fully aware that even if there is no person powerful enough to seek justice from them Allah, the Exalted, will certainly take them to account and punish them in both worlds. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, oppression to others may cause the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted, to hurl them into Hell on Judgment Day.

***“...And ever is Allāh...Wise.”***

Allah, the Exalted, possesses infinite knowledge of all things and their real nature and acts according to His infinite wisdom in a perfect manner. The muslim who understands this divine name will never object to His choices and decrees knowing that there is wisdom behind each choice of Allah, the Exalted, which benefits His servants even if they are not obvious to 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 act on this divine name by using their knowledge and blessings according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, as this is the ultimate wisdom a person can possess.

Chapter 48 – Al Fath, Verses 22-26

وَلَوْ قَتَلْتُمْ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوَلَّوْا الْأَدْبَرَ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُونَ وِلِيًّا وَلَا  
نَصِيرًا ﴿٢٢﴾

سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ  
تَبْدِيلًا ﴿٢٣﴾

وَهُوَ الَّذِي كَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ بِبَطْنِ مَكَّةَ مِنْ  
بَعْدِ أَنْ أَظْفَرَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا ﴿٢٤﴾

هُمْ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْهَدْيِ  
مَعَكُوفًا أَنْ يَبْلُغَ مَحَلَّهُمْ وَلَوْلَا رِجَالٌ مُؤْمِنُونَ وَنِسَاءٌ مُؤْمِنَاتٌ لَمْ  
تَعْلَمُوهُمْ أَنْ تَطَّوَّهُمْ فِتْصِيبَكُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَعَرَّةٌ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ لِيَدْخُلَ  
اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ لَوْ تَزَيَّلُوا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا  
مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿٢٥﴾

إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ الْحَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةَ  
فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ  
كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَى وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ  
شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٢٦﴾

*“And if those [non-muslims of Mecca] who disbelieve had fought you, they would have turned their backs [in flight]. Then they would not find a protector or a helper.*

*[This is] the established way of Allah which has occurred before. And never will you find in the way of Allah any change.*

*And it is He who withheld their hands from you and your hands from them within [the area of] Makkah after He caused you to overcome them. And ever is Allah, of what you do, Seeing.*

*They are the ones who disbelieved and obstructed you from al-Masjid al-Harām while the offering was prevented from reaching its place of sacrifice. And if not for believing men and believing women whom you did not know - that you might trample [i.e., kill] them and there would befall you because of them dishonor without [your] knowledge - [you would have been permitted to enter Makkah]. [This was so] that Allah might admit to His mercy whom He willed. If they had been apart [from them], We would have punished those who disbelieved among them with painful punishment.*

*When those who disbelieved had put into their hearts chauvinism - the chauvinism of the time of ignorance. But Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers and imposed upon them the word of righteousness, and they were more deserving of it and worthy of it. And ever is Allah, of all things, Knowing.”*

***“And if those [non-muslims of Mecca] who disbelieve had fought you, they would have turned their backs [in flight]. Then they would not find a protector or a helper. [This is] the established way of Allah which has occurred before. And never will you find in the way of Allah any change.”***

This refers to the Pact of Hudaibiya when the non-muslims insisted to make this pact and did not desire to fight the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they knew he would not be defeated.

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. One of these men from the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca was Urwa Bin Masood. After some time Urwa observed the great love the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, had for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After returning to the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca he declared that whenever the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would perform ablution his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would compete

for the water he used. If he spat the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would prevent it from falling on the ground. And they would compete for his hair if it fell from him. He concluded that he had visited and observed the King of Persia, Chosroe, the Roman King, Caesar and even the Ethiopian King, Negus but he had never seen the devotion and love the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, had for their leader the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 226-227 and has been recorded in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731-2732.

Generally speaking, these verses remind muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant muslim will have no weapon to defend himself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“And if those [non-muslims of Mecca] who disbelieve had fought you, they would have turned their backs [in flight]. Then they would not find a protector or a helper. [This is] the established way of Allah which has occurred before. And never will you find in the way of Allah any change.”***

This refers to the Pact of Hudaibiya when the non-muslims insisted to make this pact and did not desire to fight the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they knew he would not be defeated. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 226-227 and has been recorded in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731-2732.

This event teaches muslims that whenever they encounter a difficult situation they should remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, trusting that He will provide them a way out of it even if this seems impossible at the time. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

*“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”*

A muslim should understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best for His servants even if the wisdoms behind the difficulty are not obvious. It is a person's reaction which either leads to blessings or the anger of Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to reflect on the countless examples in their

own life where they believed something was bad only to change their mind later on and vice versa. This is just like when a person takes a bitter medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. Even though the medicine is bitter they still take it believing it will benefit them. It is strange how a muslim can trust a doctor whose knowledge is limited and who is not absolutely certain the bitter medicine will benefit them and fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge is infinite and when He only decrees the best for His servants.

A muslim should understand the difference between wishful thinking and trust in Allah, the Exalted. The person who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, and then expects Him to help them in difficulties is a wishful thinker. The one who will gain the help of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated in this great event, is the one who sincerely strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience and then trusts His judgment without complaining or questioning His choice.

***“...Then they would not find a protector or a helper. [This is] the established way of Allāh which has occurred before. And never will you find in the way of Allāh any change.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“[This is] the established way of Allāh which has occurred before.  
And never will you find in the way of Allāh any change.”***

Generally speaking, it is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*“...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying],  
"Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a  
thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.””*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“[This is] the established way of Allāh which has occurred before.  
And never will you find in the way of Allāh any change.”***

Ignorance prevents one from recognising the established practices of Allah, the Exalted, which in turn prevents them from sincerely obeying Him.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“[This is] the established way of Allāh which has occurred before.  
And never will you find in the way of Allāh any change.”***

Gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge allows one to recognize these established practices, which in turn leads to certainty of faith.

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“And it is He who withheld their hands from you and your hands from them within [the area of] Makkah after He caused you to overcome them...”***

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. The non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched 40 to 50 men who encircled the camp of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to capture a Companion, may Allah be pleased with him. But this force was captured by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and were presented as prisoners to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead of punishing them he forgave them and set them all free. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 227.

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

*“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”*

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid a Muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”*

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on Muslims as taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Finally, those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted, does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their small sins. A Muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness and peace of mind in both worlds.

***“...And ever is Allāh, of what you do, Seeing.”***

Nothing irrespective of its size and location is out of the reach of the divine sight and hearing of Allah, the Exalted.

The muslim who understands this divine name will be extremely cautious in their actions and speech. The same way one becomes vigilant over their actions when they are in the hearing and seeing range of someone they respect or fear a true muslim will be vigilant over their behaviour knowing no word or action escapes Allah, the Exalted. In fact, acting in this way is the high level of faith which has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. If one remains steadfast on this behaviour then they will eventually reach excellence of faith whereby they perform acts, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted, constantly watching their inner and outer being. This attitude will prevent sins and encourage one to sincerely perform righteous deeds.

In addition, this divine name encourages muslims never to give up hope whenever they face a difficulty thereby believing no one is aware or even cares about them. Allah, the Exalted, undoubtedly hears and sees their distress and will respond at the time which is best for His servant. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

*“And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by using these two senses in the way commanded by Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, one should not observe unlawful and vain things nor should they listen to unlawful and vain things. They should instead use them in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to avoid vain things as they are often the first step to the unlawful. This is achieved by acting on the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502. It advises that when one fulfils the commands of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to the obligatory duties and then strives in voluntary righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, He empowers their senses such as their sight and hearing so that they only use them in accordance to His desire and pleasure.

***“...And ever is Allāh, of what you do, Seeing.”***

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of Ihsan, which can be translated to mean excellence. This excellence refers to one's conduct and behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Acting with excellence has been mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as chapter 10 Yunus, verse 26:

*“For them who have done excellent is the best [reward] - and extra...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has explained this verse in Hadiths found in Sahih Muslim, numbers 449 and 450. The word extra in this verse refers to when the inhabitants of Paradise will be blessed with the divine vision of Allah, the Exalted. This reward befits the muslim who acts with excellence. As excellence means to lead one's life as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted, observing their outer and inner being at all times. A person who can observe a powerful authority watching them will never misbehave out of awe of them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised someone to always behave as if they were constantly being observed by a righteous man they respected. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, number 5539.

Whoever acts in this manner will very rarely commit sins and always hasten towards good deeds. This attitude creates the fear of Allah, the Exalted, and acts as a shield from the fire of trials in this world and the fire of Hell in the hereafter. This vigilance will ensure one not only fulfills all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, but it also encourages them to fulfill their responsibilities towards the creation. The peak of which is to sincerely treat others with kindness. This person will fulfill the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 251, which advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This level of excellence ensures one acts with the right intention, which is the foundation of faith according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Success is guaranteed for the one who performs good deeds and demonstrates good behavior with the right intention namely, to please Allah, the Exalted. The more excellent a person acts the stronger their faith becomes until they become a muslim who is far from heedlessness and is always struggling to beautify their hereafter and worldly life according to the teachings of Islam.

It is feared that the opposite of this reward will be given to those who turned away from Allah, the Exalted. As they lived without fearing the all-encompassing gaze of Allah, the Exalted, they will be veiled from seeing Him in the hereafter. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 15:

*“No! Indeed, from their Lord, that Day, they will be partitioned.”*

Those who fail to reach the level of acting as if they witness Allah, the Exalted, must act on the second part of the advice given in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning. This person should sincerely believe that Allah, the Exalted, is constantly observing them. Even though this state is lower in rank than the one who acts as if they observe Allah, the Exalted, none the less, it is a great way of adopting true fear of Allah, the Exalted. As mentioned earlier this attitude will prevent one from committing sins and encourage them towards good deeds. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in Imam Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, number 7935, the one who strives to adopt this mentality will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

The divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, is mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 4:

*"...He is with you wherever you are. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing."*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised to adopt the true awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, in many Hadiths. For example, in one divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He is with whoever remembers Him. This is the reason why it has been reported in Hilyat Al Awliya, volume 1, pages 84 and 85, about the Commander of the Faithful, Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, that he shied away from the glitter and pomp of the material world and only found solace in the

lonely night. Meaning, he sought the companionship of Allah, the Exalted, rather than the companionship of people.

Adopting the awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, not only prevents sins and encourages good deeds but it also prevents loneliness and depression. A person is very rarely affected by mental health issues when they are constantly surrounded by a person who loves them and aids them. No one loves the creation more than Allah, the Exalted, and there is no doubt that He is the source of all aid. Therefore, acting with excellence benefits one's faith, actions, emotional state and the wider society.

A muslim must avoid becoming like those who treat Allah, the Exalted, as the most insignificant of those who observe them. This is a serious spiritual illness which leads to all types of sins and evil behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

***“They are the ones who disbelieved and obstructed you from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām while the offering was prevented from reaching its place of sacrifice. And if not for believing men and believing women whom you did not know - that you might trample [i.e., kill] them and there would befall you because of them dishonor without [your] knowledge - [you would have been permitted to enter Mecca]. [This was so] that Allāh might admit to His mercy whom He willed. If they had been apart [from them], We would have punished those who disbelieved among them with painful punishment. When those who disbelieved had put into their hearts chauvinism - the chauvinism of the time of ignorance...”***

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Uthman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, as his ambassador to the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in order to inform them of his peaceful intention. After Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, delivered this message he was detained by the non-Muslims of Mecca. News spread to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, had been martyred. He took a pledge from the Companions, may Allah be

pleased with them, that they would not leave Mecca until they took revenge for Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, as he not only entered Mecca unarmed but as an ambassador of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ambassadors have always been treated with respect and harming them is a declaration of war. This is true even in this day and age. After this pledge the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, received news that Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was in fact alive and he eventually returned to their camp. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 228.

If Allah, the Exalted, willed He could have separated the believers living in Mecca from the non-muslims so that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, could have entered Mecca to fight with them but Allah, the Exalted, yet again extended a rope of mercy to the non-muslims of Mecca.

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a muslim. A muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

***“They are the ones who disbelieved and obstructed you from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām while the offering was prevented from reaching its place of sacrifice...When those who disbelieved had put into their hearts chauvinism - the chauvinism of the time of ignorance...”***

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then commanded the group to take an alternate road into Mecca which was rough and extremely dangerous. Eventually, when they reached close to Hudaibiya the camel of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sat down and refused to go any further. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, understood that staying within this area was best for them instead of marching forward towards Mecca. He commanded the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to setup camp in Hudaibiya and declared that he would accept anything the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca requested from him that day as long as it did not contradict the commands of Allah, the Exalted. The non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. One of these men from the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca was Urwa Bin Masood. After witnessing the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and how much they varied in respect to tribe, ethnicity and social class he declared that if the non-Muslims of Mecca decided to attack them the

Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would flee. Urwa believed that the only people who would stay and fight with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would be the people from his own tribe. He and many others believed this as tribal affiliation meant everything to them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 226 and has been recorded in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731-2732.

With the passing of time people become divided and lose the strong connection they once had with one another. There are many causes of this but a major cause is the foundation on which their connection was formed by their parents and relatives. It is commonly known that when the foundation of a building is weak the building will either get damaged over time or even collapse. Similarly, when the foundation of bonds connecting people are not correct the bonds between them will eventually weaken or even break. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brought the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, together he formed the bonds between them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, most Muslims today bring people together for the sake of tribalism, brotherhood and to show off to other families. Even though, the majority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not related but as the foundation of the bonds connecting them was correct namely, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, their bonds grew from strength to strength. Whereas, many Muslims nowadays are related by blood yet, with the passing of time become separated as the foundation of their bonds was based on falsehood namely, tribalism and similar things.

Muslims must understand that if desire for their bonds to endure and to earn reward for fulfilling the important duty of upholding the ties of kinship

and the rights of non-relatives then they must only forge bonds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The foundation of this is that people only connect with one another and act together in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been commanded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

***“When those who disbelieved had put into their hearts chauvinism - the chauvinism of the time of ignorance...”***

This verse clearly indicates that chauvinism meaning, thinking one's own group is superior to others, is something which has no place after the coming of Islam.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or wealth. Even though, many muslims have erected these barriers such as social castes and sects thereby believing some are better than others Islam

has clearly rejected this concept and declared that in this respect all people are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

***“They are the ones who disbelieved and obstructed you from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām while the offering was prevented from reaching its place of sacrifice...But Allāh sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers and imposed upon them the word of righteousness [steadfastness], and they were more deserving of it and worthy of it...”***

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions. One of which was that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not perform the Visitation (Umra) that year and instead he would return the following year. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, like many of the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not pleased with these conditions as they seemed outwardly to favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. So he spoke to Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, about this and Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, reminded him to remain firm on the obedience to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then

discussed this matter with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the latter declared that he would not oppose the command of Allah, the Exalted, and He would never let his mission fail. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 228-229.

This incident reminds Muslims to always remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even in situations which are unclear to them.

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.”*

***“But Allāh sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers and imposed upon them the word of righteousness [steadfastness], and they were more deserving of it and worthy of it...”***

Generally speaking, one becomes worthy of being supported by Allah, the Exalted, in this way when they remain firm on His sincere obedience.

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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“But Allāh sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers and imposed upon them the word of righteousness [steadfastness], and they were more deserving of it and worthy of it...”***

Generally speaking, one becomes worthy of being supported by Allah, the Exalted, in this way when they remain firm on His sincere obedience.

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds He blesses their five senses so that they use them in obedience to Him. This righteous servant will very rarely commit sins. This increase in guidance has been indicated in Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

This muslim reaches the level of excellence which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when a muslim performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will guard their mind and body from sins. This is the one who when they speak they speak for Allah, the Exalted, when they are silent they are silent for Allah, the Exalted. When they act they act for Him

and when they are still they are for His sake. This is an aspect of monotheism and understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this muslim's supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.

***“But Allāh sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers and imposed upon them the word of righteousness [steadfastness], and they were more deserving of it and worthy of it...”***

Those who fulfil the criteria of true belief will be granted this blessing.

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“But Allāh sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers and imposed upon them the word of righteousness [steadfastness], and they were more deserving of it and worthy of it...”***

The word of righteousness could mean the testification of faith.

There are many Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which advise mankind that whoever testifies that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted, will be saved from the fire of Hell. One such example is found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128.

The meaning of these Hadiths is that whoever dies while believing in this testimony will either enter Paradise and escape Hell or they will enter Hell to the extent of their sins and then eventually be allowed into Paradise where they will dwell forever. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7510.

It is important to note, that those who desire to enter Paradise without entering Hell first must not only declare their belief in Islam verbally but they must also fulfil its conditions and obligations. The testimony of faith is undoubtedly the key to Paradise but a key needs teeth in order to unlock a

specific door. The teeth of the key to Paradise are its obligations and duties. Without them meaning, the key without its teeth, will not open the door to Paradise. This is proven through many Hadiths which indicate entry into Paradise requires one to fulfil the conditions and duties of Islam. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1397, indicates that the testimony must be supported by actions in the form of the pillars of Islam, such as establishing the obligatory prayers.

The first part of the testimony namely, there is none worthy of worship save Allah, the Exalted, means that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who must be obeyed and never disobeyed. When one accepts Allah, the Exalted, as their God they must not obey anything which leads to His disobedience as Allah, the Exalted, alone is their Master and they are only His slaves. But the moment one obeys anything which leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they have corrupted their belief in His Oneness which has been indicated in chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

*“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”*

The Holy Quran has warned muslims that whoever commits sins is in reality worshipping the Devil as they have obeyed him over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 36 Yaseen, verse 60:

*“Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam, that you not worship Satan - [for] indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”*

The muslims who reject their desires, the desires of others and the commands of the Devil and instead only obey Allah, the Exalted, have truly taken Allah, the Exalted, as their God. These muslims have been granted the protection of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These muslims have practically actualised the testimony of Islam as they supported their verbal and internal claim with sincere actions according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When one acts according to his traditions they have fulfilled the second aspect of the testimony namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted. These muslims are the ones referred to in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128. It advises they will be saved from the Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted.

The person who declares Islam with the tongue and internally accepts it is undoubtedly a muslim but their true sincere belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, is diminished according to their sins.

An aspect of truly acting on the testimony is sincerely loving Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has indicated this in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. It advises that this is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is when one loves what Allah, the Exalted, loves and hates what He hates. As this was the characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2333, muslims have been commanded to follow 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...”*

It is clear from Islamic teachings that loving what Allah, the Exalted, hates and disliking what Allah, the Exalted, loves is a clear indication of a person following their own desires and obeying them over Allah, the Exalted. This attitude reduces one's belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. The following verse makes it clear that adopting this mentality is a deviation from true belief in the testimony of Islam. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 24:

*“Say, [O Muhammad], "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.”*

The one who worships Allah, the Exalted, according to their own desires worships Him on the edge. Meaning, when they face times of ease they

become pleased but when they encounter difficulties they turn away from His obedience in anger. 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 Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, informs muslims how to correctly believe and act on the testimony of faith, which prevents one being harmed by the fire of Hell in the next world. This is to first complete the obligatory duties correctly while fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes. Then one must add to this by performing voluntary righteous deeds, the best of which are the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the love of Allah, the Exalted, and causes Allah, the Exalted, to empower every organ of their body so that they only obey Him. This true and sincere obedience is the fulfilment of the testimony of faith. This is the sound heart which contains only the love of Allah, the Exalted, and is free of worldly desires and the love of the material world. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

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

It is important to note, this does not mean a muslim becomes free from committing sins but it means they sincerely repent from them whenever they are rarely committed.

To conclude, it is vital for muslims to not only declare the testimony of Islam internally and verbally but they must also show it in their actions as this is the only way to achieve true success in this world and completely escape punishment in the next world also.

***“...And ever is Allāh, of all things, Knowing.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

## Chapter 48 – Al Fath, Verse 27

لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ  
الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ ءَامِنِينَ مُحَلِّقِينَ رُءُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ لَا  
تَخَافُونَ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ فَتْحًا  
قَرِيبًا ﴿٢٧﴾

*“Certainly has Allah showed to His Messenger the vision [i.e., dream] in truth. You will surely enter al-Masjid al-Harām, if Allah wills, in safety, with your heads shaved and [hair] shortened, not fearing [anyone]. He knew what you did not know and has arranged before that a conquest near [at hand].”*

***“Certainly has Allah showed to His Messenger the vision [i.e., dream] in truth. You will surely enter al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, if Allah wills, in safety, with your heads shaved and [hair] shortened, not fearing [anyone]...”***

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions. One of which was that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not perform the Visitation (Umra) that year and instead he would return the following year. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, like many of the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not pleased with these conditions as they seemed outwardly to favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. So he spoke to Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, about this and Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, reminded him to remain firm on the obedience to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then discussed this matter with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the latter declared that he would not oppose

the command of Allah, the Exalted, and He would never let his mission fail. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 228-229.

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he headed to Mecca to perform the Visitation (Umra) as agreed with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in the previous year. After the agreed time of three days passed the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca demanded that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, leave Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told them that as he had proposed marriage to someone in Mecca he desired to hold the wedding feast there and wanted the non-Muslims to join him in the feast. But they rudely demanded that he leave Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, accepted their response and gave the order to leave Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 310-311.

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.

***“Certainly has Allah showed to His Messenger the vision [i.e., dream] in truth. You will surely enter al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, if Allah wills, in safety, with your heads shaved and [hair] shortened, not fearing [anyone]...”***

Even though Allah, the Exalted, guaranteed this would occur He still inserted the words if Allah, the Exalted, wills in order to remind muslims that nothing occurs without His will.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, there are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But there are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

*“Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”*

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

***“...He knew what you did not know...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“...He knew what you did not know and has arranged before that a conquest near.”***

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions all of which seemed to outwardly favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. After the pact was signed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, returned to Medina without performing the Visitation (Umra), which was part of the pact. This pact of peace for ten years in reality favored the Muslims. Prior to this pact whenever Muslims and non-Muslims met it often led to some sort of fighting but when warfare came to an end because of the pact whenever these people met they only conversed. When Islam was explained to the non-Muslims they began to accept it. Islam entered the hearts of more people in the next two years than it did in all the previous years since its coming. This clear victory was acknowledged by Allah, the Exalted, who revealed chapter 48 Al Fath after the agreement had been signed. Chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 1:

*“Indeed, We have given you, a clear conquest”*

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 231.

This superiority and success was granted to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as they remained sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. Even though the number of Muslims have increased over time it is obvious that the strength of Muslims has only decreased. Each Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith believes in the authenticity of the Holy Quran as doubting it would cause them to lose their faith. In the following verse Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to obtaining superiority and success which would remove the weakness and grief Muslims are experiencing all around the world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

*“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”*

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Muslims only need to become true believers in order to achieve this superiority and success in both worlds. True belief involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and those towards people, such as loving for others what one loves for themselves which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This requires one to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Through this attitude was success and superiority granted to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And if Muslims desire to achieve it then they must return to this rightly guided attitude. As Muslims believe in the Holy Quran they should understand this simple teaching and act on it.

***“...He knew what you did not know and has arranged before that a conquest near.”***

This conquest could also be referring to the victory at Khaybar, this occurred after the Pact of Hudaibiya.

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. When reaching their forts he declared that the next day he was going to give his banner to someone who loved Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and that this man was also a beloved of Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He concluded that this man would conquer Khaybar. The next day he called for Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, and entrusted him with the banner and Khaybar was then conquered. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 251.

## Chapter 48 – Al Fath, Verse 28

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى  
الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿٢٨﴾

*“It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion. And sufficient is Allah as Witness.”*

***“It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion...”***

When muslims sincerely obey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what he was sent with namely, the Holy Quran, then they will overcome all opponents and obstacles, just like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did.

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: Allah, the Exalted, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran, to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to the leaders of society and to the general public.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and

regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being sincere to the leaders of the community. This includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary, such as financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found

in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

*"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you..."*

This makes it clear that it is a duty to obey the leaders of society. But it is important to note, this obedience is a duty as long as one does not disobey Allah, the Exalted. There is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator. In cases like this, revolting against leaders should be avoided as it only leads to the harm of innocent people. Instead, the leaders should be gently advised good and forbidden evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should advise others to act accordingly and always supplicate for the leaders to remain on the correct path. If the leaders remain straight the general public will remain straight, also.

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in matters which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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...”*

***“It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion...”***

When muslims sincerely obey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what he was sent with namely, the Holy Quran, then they will overcome all opponents and obstacles, just like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did.

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.

***“It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion...”***

When muslims sincerely obey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what he was sent with namely, the Holy Quran, then they will overcome all opponents and obstacles, just like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did.

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.

***“It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion...”***

When muslims sincerely obey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what he was sent with namely, the Holy Quran, then they will overcome all opponents and obstacles, just like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did.

Muslims must remember the very important position they have been appointed to by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the ambassadors of Islam. It is extremely important for muslims to fulfil this duty according to their potential. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many muslims today believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A muslim should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

In addition, this important position should remind muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted, become angry with the muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

***“It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion...”***

When muslims sincerely obey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what he was sent with namely, the Holy Quran, then they will overcome all opponents and obstacles, just like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did.

Even though the number of muslims have increased over time it is obvious that the strength of muslims has only decreased. Each muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith believes in the authenticity of the Holy Quran as doubting it would cause them to lose their faith. In the following verse Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to obtaining superiority and success which would remove the weakness and grief muslims are experiencing all around the world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

*“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”*

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that muslims only need to become true believers in order to achieve this superiority and success in both worlds. True belief involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon

him. This includes the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and those towards people, such as loving for others what one loves for themselves which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This requires one to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Through this attitude was success and superiority granted to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And if Muslims desire to achieve it then they must return to this rightly guided attitude. As Muslims believe in the Holy Quran they should understand this simple teaching and act on it.

***“It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion...”***

When muslims sincerely obey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what he was sent with namely, the Holy Quran, then they will overcome all opponents and obstacles, just like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did.

Even though tests and trials have affected believers since the dawn of time particularly in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet it seems like the modern day tests only lead to more difficulties and humiliation for muslims. Whereas, the tests which the righteous predecessors faced only led to their honour in both worlds. The main reason for this difference in the outcome and result of tests is that when the righteous predecessors faced tests in fact, greater tests than the modern day muslims, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, they faced their tests and difficulties while sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This resulted in them safely passing the test and receiving great honour and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Whereas, many muslims in this day and age face tests but do not remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They fail to understand that success and honour through tests is only granted to those who remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whereas, being disobedient only leads to disgrace. Therefore, muslims should not worship Allah, the Exalted, on an edge whereby they are only obedient to Him in times of ease and turn away from Him angrily and disobediently in times of difficulty. This is not real servant hood or obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Simply put, no action will

aid muslims in the long run if it is not based on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Disobedience will only lead from one difficulty to another, one disgrace to another. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 147:

*“What would Allah do with [i.e., gain from] your punishment if you are grateful and believe?...”*

***“It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion...”***

When muslims sincerely obey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what he was sent with namely, the Holy Quran, then they will overcome all opponents and obstacles, just like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that he did not fear poverty for the muslim nation. Instead he feared that the world would become easy to obtain and plentiful for them. This would cause them to compete for it which would lead to their destruction as this same competition destroyed the previous nations.

It is important to understand that this does not only apply to wealth. But this warning applies to all aspects of people's worldly desires which can be encompassed by the desire for fame, wealth, authority and the social aspects of one's life, such as family, friends and a career. Whenever one aims to fulfil their desires by pursuing these things, even if they are lawful, beyond their needs it will distract them from preparing for the hereafter. It will lead them to bad character such as being wasteful and extravagant and may even take them towards sins in order to obtain these things. Failing to obtain them may lead to impatience and other acts of defiance and disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious these desires have taken control over many muslims as they would happily get up in the middle of the night in order to obtain these things such as wealth or go on a

holiday but will fail to do so when advised to offer the voluntary night prayer or attend the morning obligatory prayer at the Mosque with congregation.

There is no harm in obtaining these things as long as they are lawful and required in order to fulfil a person's needs and the needs of their dependents. But when a person goes beyond this then they will become preoccupied with them at the loss of their hereafter as the more one pursues their desires the less they will strive in preparing for the hereafter. And therefore, the warning given in this Hadith will apply to them.

***“It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion...”***

When muslims sincerely obey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what he was sent with namely, the Holy Quran, then they will overcome all opponents and obstacles, just like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4297, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a day would soon come when other nations would attack the muslim nation and even though they would be great in number they would be deemed insignificant by the world. Allah, the Exalted, would remove the fear of muslims from the hearts' of the other nations. This would occur because of the muslim nation's love for the material world and their hatred for death.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were small in number yet, they overcame entire nations whereas the muslims today are greater in number yet, have no social or political influence in the world. This is because the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, lived their lives according to the teachings of Islam thereby, favouring and preparing for the hereafter over enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. Whereas, most of the muslims today have adopted the opposite mind-set. It is important to understand that the root of all sins is the love of the material world. This is because any sin which is committed is done out of love and desire for it. The material world can be split into four aspects: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their relatives and friends. It is in the excess

pursuit of these things which lead to sins, such as earning unlawful wealth out of love for fortune. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that love for wealth and authority is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction two hungry wolves would cause if they were let loose on a herd of sheep. Whenever people seek the excess of these aspects of the material world it always leads to disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. When this occurs the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is removed which leads to nothing but trouble.

Even though, some muslims believe pursuing the excess things of the material world is harmless it is something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3158. He warned that he did not fear poverty for muslims. What he feared was that muslims would pursue the excess of this material world, such as excess wealth, and this would cause them to compete with each other over it and this would lead to their destruction. As warned in this Hadith this was the behaviour of the past nations.

As the material world is limited it is obvious that people would have to compete over it if they desired more than their necessities. This competition would cause them to adopt the characteristics which contradict the character of a true muslim, such as envy and enmity for others. They would stop caring for each other as they are too busy competing in gathering and hoarding the material world. And they would contradict the advice given in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6011, which advises that muslims should act like one body when any part of the body suffers from an illness the rest of the body shares in the pain. This competition would drive a muslim to stop loving for others what they love for themselves which is a

characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, as they desire to outdo their fellow muslims in worldly things. Persisting on this competition will cause a muslim to love, hate, give and withhold all for the sake of the material world instead of for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This competition is the difference between the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and many of the muslims today.

If muslims desire to regain the strength and influence Islam once had they must strive and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over striving for obtaining and hoarding the excess of this material world. This must occur from an individual level until it affects the whole nation.

***“...And sufficient is Allāh as Witness.”***

The divine vision of Allah, the Exalted, encompasses everything irrespective of its size or location. In addition, Allah, the Exalted, is a witness to the actions of the creation. He observes their outer physical actions and inner hidden intentions. Nothing can escape His divine vision.

A muslim should therefore strive in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in order to reach the level where they become constantly vigilant of the divine vision. This level has been referred to as excellence of faith in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. When one is fully aware of the divine vision it prevents them from sinning and encourages them to perform righteous deeds.

A muslim should be an overseer of their own soul and constantly take themselves into account in order to ensure they do not become heedless. As the main cause of sin is heedlessness. The one who takes themselves into account will find their accountability on Judgement Day easy. Whoever does not watch themselves like this will commit sins without even realising it. A muslim should also ensure they keep a watchful eye on all the people under their care and advise them accordingly as this is a responsibility given to them by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

## Chapter 48 – Al Fath, Verse 29 of 29

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ  
تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي  
وُجُوهِهِمْ مِّنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي  
الْإِنْجِيلِ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَآزَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ  
سُوْقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا  
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

*“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer], seeking bounty from Allah and [His] pleasure. Their sign is in their faces from the effect of prostration [i.e., prayer]. That is their description in the Torah. And their description in the Gospel is as a plant which produces its offshoots and strengthens them so they grow firm and stand upon their stalks, delighting the sowers - so that He [i.e., Allah] may enrage by them the disbelievers. Allah has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them forgiveness and a great reward.”*

***“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah...”***

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was reciting truthful historical accounts and beneficial lessons even though he was unlettered and had not studied the previous divine scriptures, which the non-Muslims of Mecca full well knew, was a clear sign of his Prophethood.

This was supported by the fact that they themselves testified to his sincerity and honesty. In fact, during his childhood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always under the protection of Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the evils that were widespread during the age of ignorance: the time before Islam. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached maturity he was the finest person among his people, the best of them in character and repute, the best of neighbours, the most prudent, the most honest in speech and most trustworthy. He was completely removed from immorality and other evil characteristics. Because of this he became known among the people of Mecca as Al Amin, the trustworthy. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 1, Page 180.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spent his entire life amongst the non-Muslims of Mecca was enough of a proof of his declaration of Prophethood. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, invited the non-Muslims of Mecca to embrace Islam he used his 40 years amongst them as proof that

he was speaking the truth. This evidence was undeniable even by the non-Muslims. This incident is recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4553. Only the arrogance of some prevented them from submitting to the truth. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

*“...for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?”*

***“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah...”***

The one who testifies to this fact must fulfil his rights by sincerely obeying and following 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.

***“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him...”***

This verse indicates the importance of 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.”*

***“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him...”***

This verse indicates the importance of choosing the right role model.

If one turns the pages of history they will observe many people who achieved great worldly success and in some cases benefited mankind yet, they will also observe at least one thing which taints their achievements. But if one observes the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will observe nothing except success and countless things which benefit mankind. Even though, there are people who falsely criticise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is quite evident from his highly accurate and detailed biography which has been verified by reliable muslim and non-muslim historians that this criticism is based on nothing but falsehood. This is why muslims must put aside all role models and instead study and adopt the flawless character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is the only way to achieve real untainted success in both one's worldly and religious life. 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...”*

There is no goal greater than this in this world. In fact, this is what people irrespective of their faith strive to achieve. And Allah, the Exalted, has

placed all of it in the footsteps of his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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.”*

It is simple, if a person desires worldly and religious success they should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they choose a path other than his whatever tainted success they achieve will eventually become a burden for them and it may lead to a punishment on a Great Day.

***“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him...”***

Allah, the Exalted, did not refer to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as believers in this part of the verse and instead indicated their sincerity, loyalty, love, obedience and respect for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by stating that they are always with him. With him in times of ease and difficulties, in times of peace and war and in times of joy and sadness.

Every muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they barely know him as they are too busy to study his life, character and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as

no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers...That is their description in the Torah...so that He [Allāh] may enrage by them the disbelievers...”***

This verse reminds muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant muslim will have no weapon to defend himself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers...That is their description in the Torah...so that He [Allāh] may enrage by them the disbelievers...”***

This verse does not mean a Muslim cannot befriend a non-Muslim as this particular verse refers to the non-Muslims in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Becoming intimately friendly to a non-Muslim who desired the destruction of Islam was especially dangerous at that time as the non-Muslims would spy on the Muslim community in order to gain vital intelligence which could aid them in their fight against Islam.

Generally speaking, the Holy Quran clearly advises that Allah, the Exalted, does not forbid befriending non-Muslims. Chapter 60 Al Mumtahanah, verse 8:

*“Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.”*

In reality, the main verse warns Muslims not to befriend those who direct them away from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His

prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This in reality can apply to both Muslims and non-Muslims. As warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, a Muslim is on the religion of their friend. This means a person will adopt the characteristics, good or bad, which their companions possess.

In addition, treating all people kindly, Muslims and non-Muslims, is the characteristic of a true Muslim and true believer. A Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, advises that a true Muslim is the one who keeps other people, including non-Muslims, safe from their evil speech and actions. And a true believer does not harm people or their possessions through their speech or actions. So this verse warns Muslims to accompany the pious as they will direct them towards the mercy and obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to understand that there is a difference between healthy social conduct with others and deep friendship with others. Deep friendship can lead one to compromising on their faith out of love for their companion whereas, good social conduct with others will never take one to this level. Therefore, Muslims must adopt good character and manners towards everyone but reserve deep friendship for those who will encourage them towards the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This, only a Muslim can do for another Muslim. A non-Muslim on the other hand, will either directly or indirectly encourage a Muslim to disobey Allah, the Exalted, even if they do not intend this. This is because a non-Muslim lives by a separate code of conduct than a Muslim. And the behaviour which is acceptable to a non-Muslim may not be acceptable in the eyes of Islam.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers...That is their description in the Torah...so that He [Allāh] may enrage by them the disbelievers...”***

This also means that they would never compromise on the teachings of Islam.

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers...That is their description in the Torah...so that He [Allāh] may enrage by them the disbelievers...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the characteristics which perfect a muslim's faith.

One of these characteristics is to hate for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This means one should dislike the things Allah, the Exalted, dislikes such as His disobedience. It is important to note, this does not mean one should hate others as people can sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted. Instead a muslim should dislike the sin itself which is proven by them avoiding it and warning others against it also. Muslims should continue to advise others instead of breaking ties with them as this act of kindness may well cause them to sincerely repent. This includes not disliking things based on one's own feelings, such as an action, which is lawful. Finally the proof of one disliking for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is that when they show their dislike through their words and actions it will never be in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. Meaning, their dislike for something will never cause them to commit a sin as this would prove that their dislike for something is for their own sake.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers...That is their description in the Torah...so that He [Allāh] may enrage by them the disbelievers...”***

This verse is a clear warning to anyone who claims to believe in Islam yet criticises and hates the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This verse clearly indicates that only disbelievers hate them.

A sign of truly loving Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is to love all those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, even if this contradicts one's personal opinion about them. This love includes those who proclaim love through their words and more importantly through their actions. For example, it is obvious to all that all the household of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them, all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors possessed this true love. So loving each of them is a duty upon the one who claims love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been proven through many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 17. It advises that love for the helpers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, meaning, the residents of the Holy city of Medina is a part of faith and hatred for them is a sign of hypocrisy. In another Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3862, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly warned muslims not to criticize any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as loving them is a sign of loving the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and hating them is a sign of hating the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings

be upon him, and Allah, the Exalted. This person will not succeed unless they sincerely repent. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned a similar statement regarding his blessed household, may Allah be pleased with them, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 143.

If a muslim unjustifiably criticises any muslim who demonstrates their love for Allah, the Exalted, it proves their lack of love for Allah, the Exalted. If a muslim commits a sin other muslims should hate the sin but they should, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, still have love for the sinful muslim because of their love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The sign of loving others is to treat them kindly and respectfully. Simply put, one should treat others how they wish people to treat them.

In addition, a muslim should dislike all those who show dislike for those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, irrespective of if the person is a relative or a stranger. A muslim's feelings should never prevent them from fulfilling this sign of true love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This does not mean they should harm them but they should make it clear to them that hating those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, is unacceptable. If they persist on this deviant attitude then one should separate from them until they sincerely repent.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are...merciful among themselves...That is their description in the Torah...”***

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.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are...merciful among themselves...That is their description in the Torah...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that Allah, the Exalted, will not show mercy to the one who does not show mercy to others.

Islam is a very simple religion. One of its fundamental teachings is so simple that even uneducated people can understand and act on them namely, how people treat others is how they will be treated by Allah, the Exalted. For example, those who learn to overlook and forgive the mistakes of others will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”*

Those who support others in beneficial worldly and religious matters such as emotional or financial aid will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893. This same Hadith advises that the one who conceals the faults of others will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, if one treats others with kindness and respect according to the teachings of Islam they will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted. And those who mistreat others will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted, even if they fulfill the obligatory duties which are connected to Him such as the obligatory prayers. This is because a muslim must fulfill both duties in order to achieve success namely, the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Finally, it is important to note a muslim will only be treated kindly by Allah, the Exalted, if they treat others kindly for His sake. If they do it for any other reason than they will undoubtedly forfeit the reward mentioned in these teachings. The foundation of all acts and Islam itself is one's intention. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

***“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are...merciful among themselves...That is their description in the Torah...”***

All muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are...merciful among themselves...That is their description in the Torah...”***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13, that a person cannot become a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This does not mean a muslim will lose their faith if they fail to adopt this characteristic. It means that a muslim's faith will not be complete until they act on this advice. This Hadith also indicates that a muslim will not perfect their faith until they also dislike for others what they dislike for themselves. This is supported by another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586. It advises that the muslim nation is like one body. If one part of the body is in pain the rest of the body shares the pain. This mutual feeling includes loving and hating for others what one loves and hates for themselves.

A muslim can only achieve this status when their heart is free from evil traits, such as envy. These evil traits will always cause one to desire better for themselves. So in reality, this Hadith is an indication that one should purify their heart by adopting good characteristics, such as being forgiving, and eliminate evil traits, such as envy. This is only possible through learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for muslims to understand that desiring good for others will cause them to lose out on good things. The treasury of Allah, the Exalted, has no limits so there is no need to adopt a selfish and greedy mentality.

Desiring good for others includes striving to aid others in anyway one can, such as financial or emotional support, in the same way a person would desire others to aid them in their moment of need. Therefore, this love must be shown through actions not just words. Even when a muslim forbids evil and offers advice which contradicts the desire of others they should do so gently just like they would want others to advise them kindly.

As mentioned earlier, the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of eliminating all bad characteristics which contradict mutual love and care, such as envy. Envy is when a person desires to possess a specific blessing which is only obtainable when it is taken away from someone else. This attitude is a direct challenge to the distribution of blessings chosen by Allah, the Exalted. This is why it is a major sin and leads to the destruction of the envier's good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903. If a Muslim must desire the lawful things others possess they should wish and supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, to grant them the same or similar thing without the other person losing the blessing. This type of jealousy is lawful and is praiseworthy in aspects of religion. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that muslims should only be jealous of a wealthy person who uses their wealth correctly. And be jealous of a knowledgeable person who uses their knowledge to benefit themselves and others.

A Muslim should not only love for others to obtain lawful worldly blessings but also for them to gain religious blessings in both worlds. In fact, when one wishes this for others it encourages them to strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This type of healthy competition is welcomed in Islam. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 26:

*“...So for this let the competitors compete.”*

This encouragement will also inspire a muslim to assess themselves in order to find and eliminate any faults in their character. When these two elements combine meaning, striving in sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and purifying one's character, it leads to success in both worlds.

A Muslim must therefore not only claim to love for others what they desire for themselves verbally but show it through their actions. It is hoped that the one who is concerned for others in this way will receive the concern of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are...merciful among themselves...That is their description in the Torah...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the muslim nation is like one body. If any part of the body suffers pain the rest of the body shares in its pain.

This Hadith, like many others, indicates the importance of not becoming so self-absorbed into one's own life thereby behaving as if the universe revolves around them and their problems. The Devil inspires a muslim to focus so much on their own life and their problems that they lose focus on the bigger picture which leads to impatience and causes them to become heedless of others thereby failing their duty in supporting others according to their means. A muslim should always bear this in mind and strive to aid others as much as they can. This extends to beyond financial help and includes all verbal and physical help such as good and sincere advice.

Muslims should regularly observe the news and those who are in difficult situations all over the world. This will inspire them to avoid becoming self-centered and instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about themselves is lower in rank than an animal as even they care about their offspring. In fact, a muslim should be better than animals by practically caring for others beyond their own family.

Even though a muslim cannot remove all the problems of the world but they can play their part and help others according to their means as this is what Allah, the Exalted, commands and expects.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are... You see them bowing and prostrating [in obedience]... Their sign is in their faces from the effect of prostration [i.e., prayer]. That is their description in the Torah...”***

True obedience involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to

fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are... You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer]... Their sign is in their faces from the effect of prostration [i.e., prayer]. That is their description in the Torah...”***

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 most 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 worse 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.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are... You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer]... Their sign is in their faces from the effect of prostration [i.e., prayer]. That is their description in the Torah...”***

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.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are... You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer]... Their sign is in their faces from the effect of prostration [i.e., prayer]. That is their description in the Torah...”***

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1145, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, descends every night to the nearest Heaven according to His infinite majesty and invites people to ask Him to fulfill their needs so that He can fulfill them.

Voluntary night time worship proves one's sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, as no other eyes are watching them. Offering it is a means to having an intimate conversation with Allah, the Exalted. And it is a sign of one's servanthood to Him. It has countless virtues for example, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614, declares that it is the best voluntary prayer.

No one will have a rank higher on Judgment Day or in Paradise than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and this rank has been directly connected to the voluntary night prayer. This shows that those who establish the night voluntary prayer will be blessed with the highest ranks in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 79:

*“And from [part of] the night, pray with it [i.e., recitation of the Quran] as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.”*

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3579, advises that a muslim is closest to Allah, the Exalted, in the last part of the night. Therefore, one can derive countless blessings if they remember Allah, the Exalted, at this time.

All muslims desire their supplications to be answered and their needs to be fulfilled. Therefore, they should strive to offer the voluntary night prayer as a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1770, advises that there is a special hour in every night when good supplications are always answered.

Establishing the voluntary night prayer is an excellent way to prevent one from committing sins, it helps a person to stay away from pointless social gatherings and it protects a person from many physical illnesses. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3549.

One should prepare for the voluntary night prayer by not over eating or drinking especially, before bed as it induces laziness. One should not unnecessarily tire themselves out during the day. A short nap during the day can help with this. Finally, one should avoid sins and strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and

by facing destiny with patience as the obedient find it easier to offer the voluntary night prayer.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are...Their sign is in their faces from the effect of prostration. That is their description in the Torah...”***

This could be referring to their humility. This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 9, Page 179.

The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. And any evil they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bares this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themselves if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles themselves before Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads

to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 215:

*“And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63, shows that humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

*“And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly...”*

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

*“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”*

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom’s worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are...Their sign is in their faces from the effect of prostration. That is their description in the Torah...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4119, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the best people are those who remind others of Allah, the Exalted, when they are observed.

This does not refer to those who adopt an Islamic outward appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf, as many of these people do not remind others of Allah, the Exalted, at all. This Hadith refers to those who learn and act on Islamic knowledge so that they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the purification of one's heart which leads to the purification of their outward limbs. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984. This will cause others to remember Allah, the Exalted, when they observe these righteous muslims. And this remembrance will only increase when these righteous muslims speak as they only speak in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they avoid evil and vain speech and only speak on beneficial matters in respect to the world and the hereafter. This remembrance further increases when one observes their actions as they practically implement the teachings of Islam thereby, acting only in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. For example, they love, dislike, give and withhold only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are...seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] pleasure...That is their description in the Torah...”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that those who perform deeds for the sake of people, such as showing off, instead of doing them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, will be told to gain their reward on Judgment Day from the people they acted for which in reality is not possible to do.

It is important to understand that the foundation of all deeds and even Islam itself is one's intention. It is the very thing which Allah, the Exalted, judges people on according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A muslim should ensure they perform all religious and useful worldly actions for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward from Him in both worlds. A sign of this correct mentality is that this person neither expects nor desires people to appreciate or show gratitude to them for the deeds they perform. If one desires this then it indicates their incorrect intention.

In addition, acting with the correct intention prevents sadness and bitterness as the one who acts for the sake of people will eventually encounter ungrateful people who will make them annoyed and bitter as they feel they wasted their effort and time. Unfortunately, this is seen in parents and relatives as they often fulfill their duties towards their children and relatives for their sake instead of for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. But the one who acts for the sake of Allah, the exalted, will fulfill all their

duties towards others such as their children and never become bitter or enraged when they fail to show gratitude towards them. This attitude leads to peace of mind and general happiness as they know Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their righteous deed and will reward them for it. This is the way all muslims must act otherwise they may well be left empty handed on the Day of Judgment.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are...seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] pleasure...That is their description in the Torah...”***

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.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him...And their description in the Gospel is as a plant which produces its offshoots and strengthens them so they grow firm and stand upon their stalks, delighting the sowers...”***

This verse indicates their steadfastness.

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.”*

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him...And their description in the Gospel is as a plant which produces its offshoots and strengthens them so they grow firm and stand upon their stalks, delighting the sowers...”***

This verse also indicates the gradual strengthening of their faith.

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him...Allāh has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and

agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him...Allāh has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them...”***

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to

the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him...Allāh has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them...”***

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds He blesses their five senses so that they use them in obedience to Him. This righteous servant will very rarely commit sins. This increase in guidance has been indicated in Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

This muslim reaches the level of excellence which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when a muslim performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will guard their mind and body from sins. This is the one who when they speak they speak for Allah, the Exalted, when they are silent they are silent for Allah, the Exalted. When they act they act for Him and when they are still they are for His sake. This is an aspect of monotheism and understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this muslim's supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him...Allāh has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them...”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him...Allāh has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them forgiveness...”***

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him...Allāh has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them forgiveness and a great reward.”***

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him...Allāh has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them forgiveness and a great reward.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only

this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him...Allāh has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them forgiveness and a great reward.”***

It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

*“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”*

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the

hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him...Allāh has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them forgiveness and a great reward.”***

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

***“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him...That is their description in the Torah. And their description in the Gospel...”***

The people of the book recognised the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, just like they recognized the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

The scholars from the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) living in Medina were fully aware of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they had been described in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

*“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons...”*

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

*“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons...”*

It is important to note, that all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, came with the same religion, Islam – submission to Allah, the Exalted. The only thing they differed in were smaller issues but their core and fundamental teachings were one in the same. As the Holy Quran was in harmony with the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures there was no good reason why the people of the book should have rejected the Holy Quran and the one to whom it was given namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, it was more appropriate for them to accept Islam as the scholars of the people of the book possessed knowledge which allowed them to recognize the truth easily.

In addition, the fact that the Holy Quran confirmed the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures meant that when one rejected the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they were in essence rejecting their previous divine scriptures and their Holy Prophets, such as the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon them, also.

After all these signs verifying the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, many of the scholars of the people of the book still concealed and misinterpreted their divine teachings out of envy and fear of losing the social status and wealth they had obtained as leaders of their societies.

For example, in the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This Christian delegation did not accept Islam but agreed to a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the delegation left Medina two brothers, Abu Haritha and Kurz Bin Alqama, were riding near each other. The mule of Abu Haritha stumbled and Kurz in frustration rebuked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indirectly. Abu Haritha in response rebuked him. When Kurz asked about his response Abu Haritha told him that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was undoubtedly the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, they had been waiting for and who had been described in their divine scriptures. When Kurz asked him why he rejected Islam even though he knew it was the truth Abu Haritha replied that he did so because of the honor, wealth and authority their people had given them and he was afraid he would lose it all if he accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 75-76.

It is therefore vital for Muslims to avoid the excess love for wealth and social status. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a Muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe

warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a Muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned

against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true Muslim.

If a Muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated Muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This Muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not

appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Chapter 49 – Al Hujurat, Verse 1**

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١﴾

*“O you who have believed, do not put [yourselves] before Allah and His Messenger but fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing.”*

***“O you who have believed...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“O you who have believed...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai,

number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“O you who have believed, do not put [yourselves] before Allāh and His Messenger...”***

This means one must strictly adhere to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not choose an action or decision which differs from these two sources of guidance.

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

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

***“O you who have believed, do not put [yourselves] before Allāh and His Messenger...”***

This means one must strictly adhere to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not choose an action or decision which differs from these two sources of guidance.

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.

***“O you who have believed, do not put [yourselves] before Allāh and His Messenger...”***

This means one must strictly adhere to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not choose an action or decision which differs from these two sources of guidance.

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.

***“O you who have believed...but fear Allāh...”***

Piety/Fearing Allah, the Exalted, cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the

first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“...Indeed, Allāh is Hearing...”***

Nothing irrespective of its size and location is out of the reach of the divine sight and hearing of Allah, the Exalted.

The muslim who understands this divine name will be extremely cautious in their actions and speech. The same way one becomes vigilant over their actions when they are in the hearing and seeing range of someone they respect or fear a true muslim will be vigilant over their behaviour knowing no word or action escapes Allah, the Exalted. In fact, acting in this way is the high level of faith which has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. If one remains steadfast on this behaviour then they will eventually reach excellence of faith whereby they perform acts, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted, constantly watching their inner and outer being. This attitude will prevent sins and encourage one to sincerely perform righteous deeds.

In addition, this divine name encourages muslims never to give up hope whenever they face a difficulty thereby believing no one is aware or even cares about them. Allah, the Exalted, undoubtedly hears and sees their distress and will respond at the time which is best for His servant. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

*“And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by using these two senses in the way commanded by Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, one should not observe unlawful and vain things nor should they listen to unlawful and vain things. They should instead use them in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to avoid vain things as they are often the first step to the unlawful. This is achieved by acting on the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502. It advises that when one fulfils the commands of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to the obligatory duties and then strives in voluntary righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, He empowers their senses such as their sight and hearing so that they only use them in accordance to His desire and pleasure.

***“...Indeed, Allāh is...Knowing.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

## Chapter 49 – Al Hujurat, Verses 2-3

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا  
تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ، بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ  
أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغْضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِندَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ  
أَمْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلنَّقْوَىٰ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

*“O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not.*

*Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allah - they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and great reward.”*

***“O you who have believed...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

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***“O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not. Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allāh - they are the ones whose hearts Allāh has tested for righteousness...”***

This means that one must not impose their words and opinions or the words and opinions of anyone else above the words and opinions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is in fact an aspect of being sincere to him. This has been indicated in the last part of these verses.

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:

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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.

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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.

***“O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not. Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allāh - they are the ones whose hearts Allāh has tested for righteousness...”***

This means that one must not impose their words and opinions or the words and opinions of anyone else above the words and opinions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is in fact an aspect of being sincere to him. This has been indicated in the last part of these verses.

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.

***“O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not. Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allāh - they are the ones whose hearts Allāh has tested for righteousness...”***

This means that one must not impose their words and opinions or the words and opinions of anyone else above the words and opinions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is in fact an aspect of being sincere to him. This has been indicated in the last part of these verses.

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.

***“Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allāh - they are the ones whose hearts Allāh has tested for righteousness...”***

This refers to the one who takes the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as their role model in all aspects of life and never allows their own desires or the desires of others to overrule the conduct of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

If one turns the pages of history they will observe many people who achieved great worldly success and in some cases benefited mankind yet, they will also observe at least one thing which taints their achievements. But if one observes the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will observe nothing except success and countless things which benefit mankind. Even though, there are people who falsely criticise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is quite evident from his highly accurate and detailed biography which has been verified by reliable muslim and non-muslim historians that this criticism is based on nothing but falsehood. This is why muslims must put aside all role models and instead study and adopt the flawless character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is the only way to achieve real untainted success in both one's worldly and religious life. 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...”*

There is no goal greater than this in this world. In fact, this is what people irrespective of their faith strive to achieve. And Allah, the Exalted, has placed all of it in the footsteps of his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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.”*

It is simple, if a person desires worldly and religious success they should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they choose a path other than his whatever tainted success they achieve will eventually become a burden for them and it may lead to a punishment on a Great Day.

***“Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allāh - they are the ones whose hearts Allāh has tested for righteousness...”***

This refers to the one who takes the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as their role model in all aspects of life and never allows their own desires or the desires of others to overrule the conduct of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to

fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allāh - they are the ones whose hearts Allāh has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness...”***

This refers to the one who takes the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as their role model in all aspects of life and never allows their own desires or the desires of others to overrule the conduct of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure

which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allāh - they are the ones whose hearts Allāh has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness...”***

This refers to the one who takes the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as their role model in all aspects of life and never allows their own desires or the desires of others to overrule the conduct of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This verse is similar to 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...""*

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allāh - they are the ones whose hearts Allāh has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and great reward.”***

This refers to the one who takes the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as their role model in all aspects of life and never allows their own desires or the desires of others to overrule the conduct of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if

they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allāh - they are the ones whose hearts Allāh has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and great reward.”***

This refers to the one who takes the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as their role model in all aspects of life and never allows their own desires or the desires of others to overrule the conduct of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allāh - they are the ones whose hearts Allāh has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and great reward.”***

This refers to the one who takes the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as their role model in all aspects of life and never allows their own desires or the desires of others to overrule the conduct of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra’d, verse 28:

*“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”*

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

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This refers to the one who takes the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as their role model in all aspects of life and never allows their own desires or the desires of others to overrule the conduct of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

***“O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not. Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allāh - they are the ones whose hearts Allāh has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and great reward.”***

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.

***“O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not. Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allāh - they are the ones whose hearts Allāh has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and great reward.”***

This means that one must not impose their words and opinions or the words and opinions of anyone else above the words and opinions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who fails to behave in this manner possesses pride.

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.

## Chapter 49 – Al Hujurat, Verses 4-5

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا  
يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ  
رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾

*“Indeed, those who call you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], from behind the chambers - most of them do not use reason.*

*And if they had been patient until you [could] come out to them, it would have been better for them. But Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“Indeed, those who call you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], from behind the chambers - most of them do not use reason. And if they had been patient until you [could] come out to them, it would have been better for them...”***

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people hurried over and called out to him in a loud and rude manner from behind his apartment. Then Allah, the Exalted, revealed the main verse under discussion. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 60.

It is important for a Muslim to fulfil the etiquettes and conditions of visiting others according to the teachings of Islam in order to obtain their reward. They should not stay long thereby, causing trouble to the host and their relatives. In this day and age it is easy to contact the host and their family beforehand in order to ensure they visit them at the appropriate time. They should control their actions and speech so that they avoid all types of sins such as gossiping, backbiting and slandering others. They should discuss beneficial matters in respect to the world and the hereafter. Only when one behaves in this manner will they obtain the reward outlined in the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If they fail in this they will either gain no reward or they may well be left with sins depending on how they behaved. Unfortunately, many Muslims enjoy performing this righteous deed but fail to fulfill its conditions correctly. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

*“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”*

***“Indeed, those who call you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], from behind the chambers - most of them do not use reason. And if they had been patient until you [could] come out to them, it would have been better for them...”***

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.

***“Indeed, those who call you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], from behind the chambers - most of them do not use reason. And if they had been patient until you [could] come out to them, it would have been better for them...”***

Generally speaking, in most cases, one can adopt the right behaviour and etiquettes towards others when they treat others how they desire to be treated by people.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13, that a person cannot become a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This does not mean a muslim will lose their faith if they fail to adopt this characteristic. It means that a muslim’s faith will not be complete until they act on this advice. This Hadith also indicates that a muslim will not perfect their faith until they also dislike for others what they dislike for themselves. This is supported by another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586. It advises that the muslim nation is like one body. If one part of the body is in pain the rest of the body shares the pain. This mutual feeling includes loving and hating for others what one loves and hates for themselves.

A muslim can only achieve this status when their heart is free from evil traits, such as envy. These evil traits will always cause one to desire better for themselves. So in reality, this Hadith is an indication that one should purify their heart by adopting good characteristics, such as being forgiving, and eliminate evil traits, such as envy. This is only possible through learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for muslims to understand that desiring good for others will cause them to lose out on good things. The treasury of Allah, the Exalted, has no limits so there is no need to adopt a selfish and greedy mentality.

Desiring good for others includes striving to aid others in anyway one can, such as financial or emotional support, in the same way a person would desire others to aid them in their moment of need. Therefore, this love must be shown through actions not just words. Even when a muslim forbids evil and offers advice which contradicts the desire of others they should do so gently just like they would want others to advise them kindly.

As mentioned earlier, the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of eliminating all bad characteristics which contradict mutual love and care, such as envy. Envy is when a person desires to possess a specific blessing which is only obtainable when it is taken away from someone else. This attitude is a direct challenge to the distribution of blessings chosen by Allah, the Exalted. This is why it is a major sin and leads to the destruction of the envier's good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903. If a Muslim must

desire the lawful things others possess they should wish and supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, to grant them the same or similar thing without the other person losing the blessing. This type of jealousy is lawful and is praiseworthy in aspects of religion. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that muslims should only be jealous of a wealthy person who uses their wealth correctly. And be jealous of a knowledgeable person who uses their knowledge to benefit themselves and others.

A Muslim should not only love for others to obtain lawful worldly blessings but also for them to gain religious blessings in both worlds. In fact, when one wishes this for others it encourages them to strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This type of healthy competition is welcomed in Islam. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 26:

*“...So for this let the competitors compete.”*

This encouragement will also inspire a muslim to assess themselves in order to find and eliminate any faults in their character. When these two elements combine meaning, striving in sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and purifying one's character, it leads to success in both worlds.

A Muslim must therefore not only claim to love for others what they desire for themselves verbally but show it through their actions. It is hoped that the one who is concerned for others in this way will receive the concern of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930.

***“...But Allāh is Forgiving...”***

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“...Allāh is...Merciful.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Most Merciful according to His infinite status. This attribute means that Allah, the Exalted, bestows countless favours on the creation and is always extremely kind to them. This same characteristic has been attributed to others such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 128:

*“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you [i.e., your guidance] and to the believers is kind and merciful.”*

When used in reference to the creation merciful means soft-hearted and compassionate. A muslim must adopt these qualities by looking at the creation through the eye of mercy and by treating them with mercy and compassion whether they are obedient or sinful. Many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 6030, indicate that the one who does not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. So it is vital for muslims to show mercy to all through their actions such as financial and physical help and through their words such as supplicating for them. Islam in fact rewards a muslim who shows mercy to all living things such as animals. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550. In addition, the mercy they show should not be selective or occasional instead they should strive to demonstrate mercy at all times with all of creation.

## Chapter 49 – Al Hujurat, Verse 6

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا  
قَوْمًا بِجَهْلَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

*“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”*

***“O you who have believed...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“O you who have believed...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai,

number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”***

One can imagine how difficult the spreading of unauthentic news is to control especially in this time of social media. It is therefore important for muslims to act on the main verse under discussion and not spread information to others even if they believe they are benefiting others by doing so without verifying the information first. Meaning, they should ensure it comes from a reliable source and is accurate.

Even though, this verse indicates a wicked person spreading news it can still apply to all people which share information with others without verifying it. In fact, according to this verse, this person has become wicked for spreading news without verifying it. As mentioned in this verse a person may believe they are helping others but by spreading unverified information they might harm others instead, such as emotional harm. Unfortunately, many muslims are heedless to this and have a habit of simply forwarding information through text messages and social media applications without verifying it. In cases where the information is connected to religious matters it is even more important to verify the information before spreading it. As one may get punished for the actions of others based on the incorrect information they provided them. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

In addition, with everything that is going on in the world and how it is affecting muslims it is even more important to verify information as warning

others over things which did not happen only creates distress in society and furthers the rift between muslims and other communities. This contradicts Islamic teachings.

A muslim needs to understand that Allah, the Exalted, will not question why they did not share unverified information with others on Judgment Day. But He will certainly question them if they do share information with others, whether it is verified or not. Therefore, an intelligent muslim will only share verified information and anything which is not verified they will leave knowing they will not be held accountable for it.

***“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”***

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 precedes 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.

***“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking well about people is an aspect of worshipping Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Meaning, it is an aspect of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Interpreting things in a negative way often leads to sins such as backbiting and slander. In all cases a muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. Unfortunately, adopting a negative mind-set effects people from a family unit to a national level. For example, how many times has a nation gone to war over an assumption and suspicion? The vast majority of scandals which are found in the media are based on assumptions. Even laws have been created which support the use of assumptions and suspicion. This often leads to fractured and broken relationships as people with this mind-set always believe others are taking a dig at them through their words or actions. This prevents one from taking advice from others as they believe they are only being mocked by the one giving advice and it prevents one from giving advice as they believe the other person will not pay any attention to what they say. And a person will refrain from advising the one who possesses this negative mind-set as they believe it will only lead to an argument. This leads to other negative traits such as bitterness.

It is important for muslims to understand that even if they assume someone is taking a dig at them they should still accept their advice if it is based on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They should strive to interpret things where possible in a positive way which leads to a positive mentality. And a positive mindset leads to healthy relationships and feelings. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

*“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”*

## Chapter 49 – Al Hujurat, Verses 7-8

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ  
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ  
الْكَفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ ﴿٧﴾

فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٨﴾

*“And know that among you is the Messenger of Allah. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would be in difficulty, but Allah has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance and disobedience. Those are the [rightly] guided.*

*[It is] as bounty from Allah and favor. And Allah is Knowing and Wise.”*

***“And know that among you is the Messenger of Allah...”***

Meaning, one must sincerely obey and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in all aspects of their life as this was the very purpose he was sent for.

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 know that among you is the Messenger of Allah...”***

Meaning, one must sincerely obey and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in all aspects of their life as this was the very purpose he was sent for.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and

incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“And know that among you is the Messenger of Allāh. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would be in difficulty...”***

This verse indicates that difficulties lie in contradicting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what he was sent with namely, the Holy Quran.

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 know that among you is the Messenger of Allāh. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would be in difficulty...”***

This verse indicates that difficulties lie in contradicting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what he was sent with namely, the Holy Quran.

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.

***“And know that among you is the Messenger of Allāh. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would be in difficulty...”***

This verse indicates that difficulties lie in contradicting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what he was sent with namely, the Holy Quran.

It is important to understand that the prohibitions and commands of Allah, the Exalted, do not exist to make people's life harder. They only exist in order to benefit people in both this world and in the next even if these benefits are not apparent to people. For example, the negative effects of alcohol, which science has proven, was not always apparent such as its negative effect on the organs of the body. It only became unlawful in Islam to protect people from this and other harms. In addition, It is an aspect of faith to accept something without understanding its wisdoms. If all the wisdoms of the commands and prohibitions were made apparent then it would not allow muslims to possess complete faith. Allah, the Exalted, does not benefit from these commands and prohibitions only people do.

***“And know that among you is the Messenger of Allāh. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would be in difficulty...”***

This verse indicates that difficulties lie in contradicting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what he was sent with namely, the Holy Quran.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to

continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“And know that among you is the Messenger of Allāh. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would be in difficulty...”***

This verse indicates that difficulties lie in contradicting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what he was sent with namely, the Holy Quran.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one

interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“...but Allāh has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance and disobedience. Those are the [rightly] guided. [It is] as bounty from Allāh and favor...”***

Ignorance prevents this outcome.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“...but Allāh has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance and disobedience. Those are the [rightly] guided. [It is] as bounty from Allāh and favor...”***

Ignorance prevents this outcome.

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that

they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

***“...but Allāh has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance and disobedience. Those are the [rightly] guided. [It is] as bounty from Allāh and favor...”***

Ignorance prevents this outcome.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who

became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“...but Allāh has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance and disobedience. Those are the [rightly] guided. [It is] as bounty from Allāh and favor...”***

This indicates certainty of faith, the root of which is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“...but Allāh has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance and disobedience. Those are the [rightly] guided. [It is] as bounty from Allāh and favor...”***

Understanding this truth prevents pride.

The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. And any evil they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them Muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bears this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themselves if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches Muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles themselves before Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads

to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 215:

*“And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63, shows that humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

*“And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly...”*

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

*“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”*

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom’s worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

***“...but Allāh has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance and disobedience. Those are the [rightly] guided. [It is] as bounty from Allāh and favor...”***

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between

good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“[It is] as bounty from Allāh and favor...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is infinitely bountiful and bestows favours and blessings without recompense or external cause. He gives generously without being asked.

The muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to 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]...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by bestowing the blessings they have been given to others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. The one who gives to others will be given more than they could have ever imagined. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.”*

***“...And Allāh is Knowing...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“...And Allāh is...Wise.”***

Allah, the Exalted, possesses infinite knowledge of all things and their real nature and acts according to His infinite wisdom in a perfect manner. The muslim who understands this divine name will never object to His choices and decrees knowing that there is wisdom behind each choice of Allah, the Exalted, which benefits His servants even if they are not obvious to 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 act on this divine name by using their knowledge and blessings according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, as this is the ultimate wisdom a person can possess.

## Chapter 49 – Al Hujurat, Verses 9-10

وَإِن طَافَيْنَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَقْتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِن بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِن فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٩﴾

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

*“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allah. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly.*

*Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.*

*The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy.”*

***“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two...The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers...”***

A muslim must not adopt the opposite attitude by causing separation between people.

A sign of hypocrisy is that a person spreads corruption in society. This negative characteristic affects all social levels beginning from a family unit and ending at the international level. This type of person dislikes seeing people uniting on good as this may cause the worldly status of others to increase beyond their own. This drives them to backbiting and slander in order to cause people to turn against each other. Their evil attitude destroys their own ties of kinship and when they observe other families who are happy it drives them to destroy their happiness also. They are fault finders who dedicate their time unveiling the mistakes of others in order to drag their social status down. They are the first people to begin gossiping about others and act deaf whenever good things are spoken about. Peace and quiet disturbs them so they seek to create problems in order to entertain themselves. They fail to remember the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546. It advises that whoever covers the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will cover their faults. But whoever seeks out and unveils the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will expose their faults to the people. So in reality, this type of person is only unveiling their own faults to society even though they believe they are exposing the faults of others.

***“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two...The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers...”***

This verse is connected to chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

*“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”*

In this verse Allah, the exalted, explains how people should conduct themselves when conversing with others so that they derive benefit for themselves and others. The first is that when muslims gather they should discuss how to benefit others which encompasses charity in the form of wealth and physical aid. If a muslim is not in a position to help a needy person then this is an excellent way of gaining reward equal to actually helping them. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6800, advises that the one who inspires someone else towards good will be rewarded as if they performed the good action themselves. If one cannot aid someone in difficulty or inspire another to fulfill this task they can at least encourage others to supplicate for the one in need. Supplication for an absent person causes the Angels to pray for the supplicator. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534. This mentality can inspire the group to visit the needy person which provides them with emotional support. This has a powerful psychological impact and provides them with a new mode of strength when dealing with their hardship. The

important thing to note is that when one mentions the situation of a needy person their intention must be to aid them in their hour of need. It should never be for the sake of passing time and making them a target of ridicule.

The second way to gain blessings is when one converses about anything lawful that will provide benefit to someone in this world or the next. This aspect includes advising others to do good and refrain from evil in every aspect of their life.

The third aspect mentioned in this verse involves conversing with others with a constructive mindset which brings people together in a positive way instead of possessing a destructive mindset which causes divisions within society. If a person cannot bring people together in a loving way then the minimum they can do is not cause divisions amongst them. Even this is recorded as a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2518.

In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, advises that reconciling between two opposing muslims for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is superior to voluntary prayer and fasting. Every good thing found within society was the outcome of this pious attitude such as the construction of schools, hospitals and Mosques.

But it is important to note, that a muslim will only obtain the great reward mentioned in this verse when they perform the righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Each person will be rewarded based on their intention not just their physical action. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The insincere muslim will find that on Judgment Day they will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

***“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two...The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers...”***

This is only possible when one adopts a positive attitude thereby thinking good about others.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking well about people is an aspect of worshipping Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Meaning, it is an aspect of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Interpreting things in a negative way often leads to sins such as backbiting and slander. In all cases a muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. Unfortunately, adopting a negative mind-set effects people from a family unit to a national level. For example, how many times has a nation gone to war over an assumption and suspicion? The vast majority of scandals which are found in the media are based on assumptions. Even laws have been created which support the use of assumptions and suspicion. This often leads to fractured and broken relationships as people with this mind-set always believe others are taking a dig at them through their words or actions. This prevents one from taking advice from others as they believe they are only being mocked by the one giving advice and it prevents one from giving advice as they believe the other person will not pay any attention to what they say. And a person will refrain from advising the one

who possesses this negative mind-set as they believe it will only lead to an argument. This leads to other negative traits such as bitterness.

It is important for muslims to understand that even if they assume someone is taking a dig at them they should still accept their advice if it is based on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They should strive to interpret things where possible in a positive way which leads to a positive mentality. And a positive mindset leads to healthy relationships and feelings. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

*“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”*

***“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two...The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers...”***

These verses also indicate that one must avoid the characteristics which creates disunity within society.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6541, discusses some aspects of creating unity within society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, firstly advised muslims not to envy each other.

This is when a person desires to obtain the very blessing someone else possesses meaning, they desire for the owner to lose the blessing. And it involves disliking the fact that the owner was given the blessing by Allah, the Exalted, instead of them. Some only desire this to occur in their hearts without showing it through their actions or speech. If they dislike their thought and feeling it is hoped that they will not be held accountable for their envy. Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when a person strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing.

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feeling and if they strive to obtain a similar blessing without the owner

losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second is when a person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

The evil type of envy, as mentioned earlier, directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The envious person behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. This is why it is a major sin. In fact, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903, envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

An envious muslim must strive to act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. An envious muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A muslim should remember that other people are not perfect just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess.

Another point must be made on this topic. A muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those who oppose their scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars a muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a muslim to sever

ties with another muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another muslim. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a muslim should continue to advise the other muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims are commanded to be like brothers to one another. This is only achievable if they obey the previous advice given in this Hadith and strive to fulfil their duty towards other muslims according to the teachings of Islam, such as helping others in matters of good and warning them from evil matters. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, advises that a muslim should fulfil the following rights of other muslims: they are to return the Islamic greeting of peace, to visit the sick, to take part in their funeral prayers and to reply to the sneezer who praises Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must learn and fulfil all the rights other people, especially other muslims, have over them.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another muslim. The sins a person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4884, that whoever humiliates another muslim Allah, the Exalted, will humiliate them. And whoever protects a muslim from humiliation will be protected by Allah, the Exalted.

The negative characteristics mentioned in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning can develop when one adopts pride. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, pride is when one looks down on others in contempt. The proud person sees themselves as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a

Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that it is a sin for a muslim to hate another muslim. This hatred applies to worldly things and not disliking others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, loving and hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then a muslim must show respect to others in all cases and dislike only their sins without actually hating the person. In addition, their dislike must never cause them to act against the teachings of Islam as this would prove their hatred is based on their own desires and not for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The root cause of despising others for worldly reasons is pride. It is vital to understand that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a muslim's life, property and honour are all sacred. A muslim must not violate any of these rights without a just reason. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true muslim until they protect other

people, including non-muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should treat others exactly how they want people to treat them. This will lead to much blessings for an individual and create unity within their society.

***“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two...The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers...”***

These verses also indicate that one must avoid the characteristics which creates disunity within society.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the muslim nation is like one body. If any part of the body suffers pain the rest of the body shares in its pain.

This Hadith, like many others, indicates the importance of not becoming so self-absorbed into one's own life thereby behaving as if the universe revolves around them and their problems. The Devil inspires a muslim to focus so much on their own life and their problems that they lose focus on the bigger picture which leads to impatience and causes them to become heedless of others thereby failing their duty in supporting others according to their means. A muslim should always bear this in mind and strive to aid others as much as they can. This extends to beyond financial help and includes all verbal and physical help such as good and sincere advice.

Muslims should regularly observe the news and those who are in difficult situations all over the world. This will inspire them to avoid becoming self-

centered and instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about themselves is lower in rank than an animal as even they care about their offspring. In fact, a muslim should be better than animals by practically caring for others beyond their own family.

Even though a muslim cannot remove all the problems of the world but they can play their part and help others according to their means as this is what Allah, the Exalted, commands and expects.

***“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two...The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers...”***

Behaving in this manner is an aspect of being sincere 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 if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allāh...”***

The party obeying Allah, the Exalted, should be supported irrespective of how one feels towards them.

Since the passing of the righteous predecessors the strength of the muslim nation has weakened dramatically. It is logical that the greater the number of people in a group the stronger the group will become yet muslims have somehow defied this logic. The strength of the muslim nation has only decreased as the number of muslims have increased. One of the main reasons this has occurred is connected to chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2 of the Holy Quran:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many muslims now observe who is doing an action instead of observing what they are doing. If the person is

linked to them for example, a relative, they support them even if the thing is not good. Similarly, if the person has no relationship with them they turn away from supporting them even if the thing is good. This attitude completely contradicts the traditions of the righteous predecessors. They would support others in good irrespective of who was doing it. In fact, they went so far on acting on this verse of the Holy Quran that they would even support those they did not get on with as long as it was a good thing.

The other thing connected to this is that many muslims fail to support each other in good as they believe the person they are supporting will gain more prominence than them. This condition has even affected scholars and Islamic educational institutes. They make lame excuses not to aid others in good as they do not have a relationship with them and they fear their own institution will be forgotten and those they help will gain further respect in society. But this is completely wrong as one only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the truth. As long as one's intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, supporting others in good will increase their respect within society. Allah, the Exalted, will cause the hearts of the people to turn to them even if their support is for another organisation, institution or person. For example, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed this world Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily challenged for the Caliphate and would have found plenty of support in his favour. But he knew the right thing to do was to nominate Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not worry about being forgotten by society if he supported another person. He instead obeyed the command in the verse mentioned earlier and supported what was right. This is confirmed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. The honour and respect of Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, within society only increased by this action. This is obvious to those who are aware of Islamic history.

Muslims must reflect on this deeply, change their mentality and strive to aid others in good irrespective of who is doing it and not hold back fearing their support will cause them to be forgotten within society. Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will never be forgotten in both this world and the next. In fact, their respect and honour will only grow in both worlds.

***“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allāh...”***

The party obeying Allah, the Exalted, should be supported irrespective of how one feels towards them.

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“...And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly.”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest as well as using each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach muslims to push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themselves harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.<sup>1</sup> So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”*

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. They should not be neglected nor handed over to others such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

***“...And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly.”***

One of the major reasons why society seems to be digressing is because people have abandoned acting justly. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6787, that previous nations were destroyed as the authorities would punish the weak when they broke the law but would pardon the rich and influential. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, being the head of state even declared in this Hadith that if his own daughter committed a crime he would enforce the full legal punishment on her. Even though members of the general public might not be in a position to advise their leaders to remain just in their actions but they can influence them indirectly by acting justly in all their dealings and actions. For example, a muslim must act justly in respect to their dependents, such as their children, by treating them equally. This has been specifically advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3544. They should act justly in all their business dealings irrespective of who they deal with. If people act with justice on an individual level then communities can change for the better and in turn those who are in influential positions, such as politicians, will act justly whether they desire to or not.

***“The believers are but brothers...”***

With the passing of time people become divided and lose the strong connection they once had with one another. There are many causes of this but a major cause is the foundation on which their connection was formed by their parents and relatives. It is commonly known that when the foundation of a building is weak the building will either get damaged over time or even collapse. Similarly, when the foundation of bonds connecting people are not correct the bonds between them will eventually weaken or even break. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brought the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, together he formed the bonds between them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, most Muslims today bring people together for the sake of tribalism, brotherhood and to show off to other families. Even though, the majority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not related but as the foundation of the bonds connecting them was correct namely, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, their bonds grew from strength to strength. Whereas, many Muslims nowadays are related by blood yet, with the passing of time become separated as the foundation of their bonds was based on falsehood namely, tribalism and similar things.

Muslims must understand that if desire for their bonds to endure and to earn reward for fulfilling the important duty of upholding the ties of kinship and the rights of non-relatives then they must only forge bonds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The foundation of this is that people only connect with one another and act together in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been commanded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

***“The believers are but brothers...”***

All muslims must uphold the ties to other muslims. This applies to all muslims whether they are related or not and if they know each other or not. Many rights of muslims have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and each muslim should strive to learn and fulfil them. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, listed five rights a muslim owes another muslim.

Firstly, they are to respond to the greeting of peace even if replying contradicts their desire. More importantly a muslim must fulfill the Islamic greeting of peace practically by showing peace and kindness towards others through their speech and actions. This is the true meaning of the Islamic greeting of peace.

A muslim should try to visit sick muslims in order to provide them physical and psychological support. It would be difficult to visit all sick muslims but if each muslim at least visited their sick relatives then the vast majority of the sick would obtain this support. All forms of vain or sinful speech and actions must be avoided such as, gossiping otherwise a muslim will only earn sins instead of blessings.

A muslim when possible should attend the funeral of other muslims as each attendee supplicates for the deceased to be forgiven. Therefore, the more muslims in attendance the better. Just like one desires others to attend their funeral and supplicate for them they too should do this for others. In this particular deed is a good reminder for a muslim that they too will eventually die. Hopefully, this will alter their behaviour for the better so that they better prepare for their own death by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims should accept the invitation for meals and social events as long as no unlawful or disliked activities take place, which in this day and age is quite rare. An important point to note is that some muslims attend social events where unlawful or disliked things occur and cite this Hadith to support their actions. One should not misinterpret the divine teachings in order to fulfil their own desires as this is clear misguidance and an invitation to divine punishment.

Finally, the main Hadith concludes by advising muslims to supplicate for the muslim who praises Allah, the Exalted, after they sneeze.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated an extremely important duty in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2714, which is to offer good and sincere advice to other muslims.

Firstly, it is important to note good advice should be offered to all irrespective of their faith. This is clearly advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. Muslims should advise others the way they wish people to advise them. One should never let their ill feelings prevent them from fulfilling this duty as one who purposely offers bad advice will find that people give them incorrect advice. Offering sincere advice is so important that as mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1925, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would take a pledge from people to fulfil this duty along with fulfilling the obligatory duties such as the prayer. The fact that sincerely advising others has been placed with these obligatory duties highlights its importance. So a muslim should never overlook this fact.

Every person, irrespective of faith, loves to obtain the things which would benefit them and protect them from harmful things. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for other muslims what they love for themselves. This should be shown through one's actions by striving to ensure others obtain those things they love for themselves by any means available to them. A muslim should not merely claim this through their words.

Another right all muslims have is that one should sincerely supplicate for them. This is an aspect of being merciful to each other which has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 29:

*“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those with him are...merciful among themselves...”*

In fact, when a muslim supplicates for another they themselves benefit from it. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6927, when a muslim secretly supplicates for other muslims an Angel supplicates for them.

Another important right is that a muslim should love and hate for other muslims what they love and hate for themselves. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made this a condition of sincere belief in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

A muslim should be happy at the lawful joy of another muslim and hope it lasts for them. They should get sad when another muslim faces a difficulty and help them through it even if it is just a supplication on their behalf. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6011, that muslims are like one body. If a part of the body is ill then the rest of the body shares in the pain.

A muslim should never cause unjustified harm to another muslim or non-muslim through their words or actions as this is the very definition of a muslim given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2627. In fact,

keeping people safe from one's harm is an act of charity a person does to themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250. This is an act of charity to oneself as it protects them from the punishment of Allah, the Exalted.

The rights of other muslims include removing any obstacles from their path. This includes physical obstacles as well as figurative obstacles which can cause them harm. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6670, advises that a person will be granted Paradise for removing a tree which was blocking the path used by fellow muslims.

It is the right of a muslim that other muslims help them when they are oppressed by any means necessary such as, financial help, and help those muslims who commit oppression by warning them about the consequences of this behaviour. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6952. It is important to note, advice should only be given if the adviser is safe from the oppressor's harm.

A muslim is not allowed to sever ties with another muslim for more than three days over a worldly reason. This has been made clear in many Hadiths such as the one found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1932. Turning away from another muslim in such a manner is such a serious issue that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1740, that Allah, the Exalted, forgives all muslims every Monday and Thursday except those who have forsaken another muslim until they reconcile.

Another right is that a muslim should not behave arrogantly with other muslims. Instead, they should demonstrate humility which always leads to affection and the spread of love within society. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4895. Conversely, arrogance and pride only lead to social barriers and segregation of societies. If a muslim is treated with arrogance they should not reply in the same manner instead they should hold to patience and forgiveness.

In fact, being humble towards others irrespective of their social status is a characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1415, he would never dislike walking with the poor and needy in order to fulfil their needs.

It is important for a muslim to never pay any attention to rumours or gossip about other muslims as in most cases they are either completely untrue or contain a few facts mixed with allot of fiction. In many cases, even the truth has been twisted out of context in order to fulfil someone's evil desires. A muslim should disregard what has been said and advise the gossiper to sincerely repent. They should never repeat the gossip to others nor mention the gossiper to others. By concealing this they should hope Allah, the Exalted, will conceal their faults in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930.

In addition, a muslim should never backbite or slander other muslims as this is a major sin. In fact, one Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 290, warns that the tale bearer will not enter Paradise.

It is a duty of a muslim to strive within their means to aid other muslims from any distress. It is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225, that whoever does this will be relieved of a hardship on the Day of Judgment. The same Hadith advises that whoever relieves the financial burden of another muslim Allah, the Exalted, will relieve them in both worlds. So muslims should be kind towards those who are indebted to them.

Another right a muslim has over other muslims is that if a muslim wrongs another muslim and then seeks forgiveness from them the victim should forgive them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This will result in Allah, the Exalted, forgiving the victim of their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”*

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6592, that whoever forgives others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be blessed with more honour.

In addition, a muslim should treat other muslims according to their status which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1921. Meaning, elders should be treated with respect and the young with mercy. This Hadith warns that those who do not behave in this manner do not belong to the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 357, advises that a part of respecting Allah, the Exalted, is showing respect to the elderly. All people are a part of the creation of Allah, the Exalted, so respecting them according to the teachings of Islam is in fact respecting the Creator namely, Allah, the Exalted.

Islam teaches muslims that what they give is what they shall receive. According to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2022, when a young person honours and respects an elderly person because of their age Allah, the Exalted, will appoint someone to honour them if and when they reach elderly age.

Another right a muslim owes to other muslims is to be cheerful with them as long as sins are avoided. In fact, smiling to another muslim in order to comfort them is recorded as a charity. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1956.

The one who is easy to deal with, soft and mild mannered towards other muslims has been given the glad tidings of protection from the fire of Hell in

a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2488. A part of being cheerful is speaking kindly to others. This is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7512, that this is a deed which protects one from the fire of Hell. In fact, a person who acts on this has been promised a beautiful chamber in Paradise in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1984.

It is a duty on muslims to correct the problems between other muslims according to their capacity. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2509, that doing this is better than voluntary prayer, fasting or charity.

Another right a muslim has over other muslims is that one should conceal their faults. It has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930, that Allah, the Exalted, will cover the faults of a muslim who conceals the faults of others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546, warns that whoever exposes the faults of others will have their faults exposed by Allah, the Exalted. This does not mean a muslim should ignore the sins of others. But it means they should gently and privately advise the sinner to sincerely repent and not mention their sin to others. Even if a muslim desires to teach others not to commit a similar sin they should follow the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and advise others without naming people. An example of this is recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6979. A muslim should therefore screen the defects of others just as Allah, the Exalted, screens their defects and the mistakes of all others.

A muslim should always avoid any situation which causes suspicion and doubt in the mind of other muslims. This is in order to protect them from sins which others who are suspicious might commit such as backbiting and slander. Extending this protection to other muslims is a part of loving good for them just as one loves good for themself. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3101, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once met his wife during the night. At the same time two Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, walked by hurriedly. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, called and informed them he was meeting his wife and not a strange woman. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, made it clear that an incorrect thought did not even cross their minds. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, only responded in this manner in order to teach all muslims that one should clarify any activity which could be seen as suspicious in order to protect the thoughts of other muslims.

This is connected to another pious characteristic. It is when one avoids doing things which are lawful in order to prevent other muslims feeling bad. For example, a husband not publically showing affection to his wife in front of other muslims, such as his sister. Even though, this is completely lawful but doing it in front of his sister might make her feel bad especially if her husband does not do things like that with her. This is a higher level of noble character which is not obligatory but a great virtue.

Another right muslims have over other muslims is that they should be greeted with the Islamic greeting of peace. This should include the muslims one knows and those a muslim does not know. Many Hadiths discuss the importance and virtue of doing this good deed. For example, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 68, links spreading the greeting of peace to other muslims to gaining entry into Paradise. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 86:

*“And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet [in return] with one better than it or [at least] return it [in a like manner]...”*

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2706, advises that a muslim should extend the greeting of peace when they meet another muslim and when they leave them.

It is important to note, the Islamic greeting of peace is an indication that a muslim should not only welcome a muslim with peaceful words but they must maintain kind words throughout every conversation. In addition, this spreading of peace should be shown through a muslim’s actions not just words. This is the true meaning of extending the Islamic greeting of peace to others.

A muslim should also follow the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by shaking hands with other muslims

when they extend the greeting of peace to them. In fact, the muslims who do this and avoid any sins during their conversation will have their minor sins forgiven before they separate. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5212.

It is a duty on all muslims to defend the rights of other muslims as much as they can without committing sins or harming themselves. For example, they should protect the honour of other muslims which are often violated behind their backs in the form of backbiting and slander. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931, that whoever protects the honour of another muslim will be protected from the fire of Hell on Judgment Day.

If another muslim shows bad manners it is a duty on other muslims to maintain good manners with them. In addition, they should advise them in private to change their character for the better. Doing so in public can lead to their embarrassment and it is a duty of a muslim not to embarrass other muslims. In addition, a person who is embarrassed will more likely become angered and they therefore are less likely to accept the good advice which has been given to them.

***“...And fear Allāh that you may receive mercy.”***

Piety/Fearing Allah, the Exalted, cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the

first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“...And fear Allāh that you may receive mercy.”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be

granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

## Chapter 49 – Al Hujurat, Verse 11

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرِ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا  
مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا  
أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ  
الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

*“O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name [i.e., mention] of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”*

***“O you who have believed...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“...let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them...”***

Looking down upon others is a sign of pride.

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.

***“...let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them...”***

Whenever a muslim finds themselves on a lawful path they should firstly show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings He alone granted them in the way prescribed by Islam. The other important thing is that a muslim should never look down on others believing that their path is somehow superior to the path of others especially those who are on a lawful path also. This only leads to pride which will lead one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266. Instead, they should firstly understand that they are unaware of the final outcome of their life or the lives of others. Someone on an unlawful path can easily sincerely repent and be saved before death.

Secondly, in the case of others on a lawful path a muslim should understand that each person has been granted the best path for them which differs from the best possible path of others. For example, one muslim may spend most of their time in a Mosque and another muslim may spend most of their time on lawful worldly things, such as an occupation. The first muslim is not better than the second as each person is on the best path for them. If they swapped places it would most likely lead them to destruction. For example, if they swapped the one who now spends time in a Mosque could adopt pride and thus be destroyed. So it is better for them to be involved in lawful worldly things. On the other hand, the other muslim who now dedicates most of their time to the material world could get lost in it and head towards the unlawful. So it would be better for this muslim to spend most of their time in a Mosque.

Therefore, muslims should never be jealous nor look down upon each other as each person is on the best possible path for them, as long as this path is lawful. This attitude will always lead to humility and mutual love for each other and according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2510, sincerely loving each other for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is a characteristic which leads one to Paradise. It is important to note, this discussion does not mean one should not try to improve themselves by acting on the teachings of Islam. It means they should be happy for others who are journeying down a lawful path.

***“...let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or wealth. Even though, many muslims have erected these barriers such as social castes and sects thereby believing some are better than others Islam has clearly rejected this concept and declared that in this respect all people are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

***“...let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that nobility does not lie in one's lineage as all people are the descendants of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and he was made of dust. Therefore, people should give up boasting about their relatives and lineage.

It is important to understand that even though some ignorant muslims have adopted the attitude of other nations by creating castes and sects thereby believing some people are superior to others based on these groups Islam declared a simple criterion for superiority namely, piety. Meaning, the more a muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience the greater they are in rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

This verse destroys all other standards which have been created by ignorant people such as one's race, ethnicity, wealth, gender or social status.

In addition, if a muslim is proud of a pious person in their lineage they should correctly demonstrate this belief by praising Allah, the Exalted, and following in their footsteps. Boasting about others without following in their footsteps will not help someone in either this world or the next. This has been made clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2945.

Finally, the one who is proud of others but fails to follow in their footsteps is indirectly dishonoring them as the outside world will observe their bad character and assume their righteous ancestor behaved in the same manner. These people should therefore strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because of this reason. These are like those people who adopt the outward traditions and advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf yet, fail to adopt his inner character. The outside world will only think negatively about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they observe the bad character of these muslims.

***“...And do not insult one another...”***

A Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5023, warns that a sign of hypocrisy is insulting others especially, when they disagree with them. When speaking to others a muslim should never use foul and sinful language. It is important to remember that it only takes a single sinful word to cause a person to plummet into Hell on Judgement Day. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. A muslim should adhere to the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by replying evil words with kind words or they should simply remain silent and ignore the person who utters foul language.

***“...And do not insult one another...”***

The one who is obscene and bad mouthed is hated by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2002. The one who angers Allah, the Exalted, is far away from His mercy and thus more susceptible to punishment in both worlds.

Foul language is speech which contradicts modesty and good manners. It includes swearing and using shameless language. Wherever possible one should reference something indirectly rather than using shameless language.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1977, that a true believer does not utter foul words. So the one who makes this their habit should review their faith and sincerely repent from this evil trait. In fact, using foul language has been indicated as a branch of hypocrisy by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2027.

Replying to a shameless person is foolish and only leads to sins. For example, a person commits a major sin when they abuse their own parents. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 5973, this

occurs when a person abuses another person's parents and the latter in response abuses their parents.

A muslim should strive to purify their tongue by only uttering sensible words otherwise they may speak a foul word which causes them to sink into Hell greater than the distance between the east and west of this world. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7481.

***“...And do not insult one another...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6593, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of backbiting and slander.

Backbiting is when one criticizes someone behind their back in a way which would be displeasing to them even though it is the truth. Whereas, slander is similar to backbiting except that the statement is not true. These sins mainly involve speech but can include other things, such as using hand signals. These are major sins and backbiting has been compared to eating the flesh of a dead corpse in the Holy Quran. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

*“...And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it...”*

It is important to understand that these sins are worse than most of the sins which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted. This is because the sins between a person and Allah, the Exalted, will be forgiven by Him if the sinner sincerely repents. But Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive a backbiter or a slanderer until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then on Judgment day the good deeds of the backbiter/slanderer will be given to their victim as compensation and if needed the sins of the victim will be

given to their backbiter/slanderer until justice is established. This may well cause the backbiter/slanderer to be hurled into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

The only times backbiting is lawful is if one is warning and protecting another person of harm or if a person is resolving a complaint against another with a third party, such as a legal case.

One should avoid backbiting and slandering by firstly gaining knowledge on the evil consequences of these major sins. Secondly, a person should only utter words which they would happily say in front of the person full well knowing they would not take it in an offensive way. Thirdly, a muslim should only utter words about another if they would not mind someone else saying those or similar words about them. Meaning, they should talk about others how they want people to talk about them. Finally, a muslim should concentrate on fixing their own faults and when done sincerely it will prevent them from backbiting and slandering others.

***“...And do not insult one another...”***

The literal translation of this part of the verse would be do not insult yourselves. This indicates that one should care for others just like they care for themselves, as insulting others is like insulting oneself in the eyes of Islam.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the muslim nation is like one body. If any part of the body suffers pain the rest of the body shares in its pain.

This Hadith, like many others, indicates the importance of not becoming so self-absorbed into one's own life thereby behaving as if the universe revolves around them and their problems. The Devil inspires a muslim to focus so much on their own life and their problems that they lose focus on the bigger picture which leads to impatience and causes them to become heedless of others thereby failing their duty in supporting others according to their means. A muslim should always bear this in mind and strive to aid others as much as they can. This extends to beyond financial help and includes all verbal and physical help such as good and sincere advice.

Muslims should regularly observe the news and those who are in difficult situations all over the world. This will inspire them to avoid becoming self-centered and instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about

themselves are lower in rank than an animal as even they care about their offspring. In fact, a muslim should be better than animals by practically caring for others beyond their own family.

Even though a muslim cannot remove all the problems of the world but they can play their part and help others according to their means as this is what Allah, the Exalted, commands and expects.

***“...and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name [i.e., mention] of disobedience after [one's] faith...”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cursed three times the one who lies in order to make people laugh.

Joking while sticking to the truth is not a sin but it is difficult to do consistently. The one who jokes excessively will eventually slip up and utter words which are sinful, such as lying, backbiting or mocking others. Therefore, it is safer to avoid joking excessively which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1995. In addition, the one who jokes excessively even if they manage to always speak the truth and not offend anyone will encounter a spiritual disease which has been warned of in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4193, namely, a spiritually dead heart. This occurs to the person who jokes and laughs excessively as this mentality demands they always think and discuss funny issues and avoid serious issues. The matter of preparing for death and the hereafter are serious issues and if one avoids thinking and discussing them they will never correctly prepare for them. This lack of preparation will cause their spiritual heart to die. In fact, the more seriously one ponders over the hereafter the less they will laugh and joke. This is indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6486.

Joking too often also causes others to lose respect for them. This can cause many problems such as, not being taken seriously when they command good and forbid evil even if it is to their own children.

Excessively joking often leads to enmity between people as one can easily take things seriously. This leads to fractured and broken relationships. Many people have even become physically and emotionally hurt because of jokes.

***“O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name [i.e., mention] of disobedience after [one's] faith...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing,

misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name [i.e., mention] of disobedience after [one's] faith...”***

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.

***“O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name [i.e., mention] of disobedience after [one's] faith...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 67, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the blood, property and honor of a muslim are sacred in Islam.

This Hadith, like many others, teaches muslims that success can only be obtained when one fulfills the rights of Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayers, and the rights of people. One without the other is not good enough.

A true believer and muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. Therefore, it is vital for muslims not to harm others through their actions or words.

A muslim must respect the possessions of others and not try to wrongfully acquire them for example, in a legal case. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 353, warns that someone who does this will go to Hell even if the

thing they acquired was as insignificant as a twig of a tree. Muslims should only use the possessions of others according to their wishes and return them in a way pleasing to its owner.

The honor of a muslim should not be violated through actions or speech, such as backbiting or slander. A muslim should instead defend the honor of others whether in their presence or absence as this will lead to their protection from the fire of Hell. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931.

To conclude, one should avoid wronging the self, possessions or honor of others by treating others exactly how they desire others to treat them. Just like one loves this for themselves they should love it for others and prove this through their actions and speech. This is the sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

***“O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name [i.e., mention] of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”***

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.

***“O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name [i.e., mention] of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the bankrupt muslim is the one who accumulates many righteous deeds, such as fasting and prayer, but as they mistreated people their good deeds will be given to their victims and if necessary their victim's sins will be given to them on Judgement Day. This will lead to them being hurled into Hell.

It is important to understand that a muslim must fulfil two aspects of faith in order to achieve success. The first are the duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer. The second aspect is in respect to people which includes treating them kindly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true believer until they keep they physical and verbal harm away from the life and possessions of others.

It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, is infinitely forgiving meaning, He will forgive those who sincerely repent to Him. But He will not forgive the sins which involve other people until the victim forgives first. As people are not so forgiving a muslim should be fearful that those

who they have wronged will exact revenge on them by taking away their precious good deeds on Judgment Day. Even if a muslim fulfils the rights of Allah, the Exalted, they may still end up in Hell simply because they have wronged others. It is therefore important for muslims to strive to fulfil both aspects of their duties in order to obtain success in both worlds.

***“O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name [i.e., mention] of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”***

One should avoid these bad characteristics by simply treating others how they wish to be treated by people.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13, that a person cannot become a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This does not mean a muslim will lose their faith if they fail to adopt this characteristic. It means that a muslim's faith will not be complete until they act on this advice. This Hadith also indicates that a muslim will not perfect their faith until they also dislike for others what they dislike for themselves. This is supported by another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586. It advises that the muslim nation is like one body. If one part of the body is in pain the rest of the body shares the pain. This mutual feeling includes loving and hating for others what one loves and hates for themselves.

A muslim can only achieve this status when their heart is free from evil traits, such as envy. These evil traits will always cause one to desire better for themselves. So in reality, this Hadith is an indication that one should purify their heart by adopting good characteristics, such as being forgiving, and eliminate evil traits, such as envy. This is only possible through learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for muslims to understand that desiring good for others will cause them to lose out on good things. The treasury of Allah, the Exalted, has no limits so there is no need to adopt a selfish and greedy mentality.

Desiring good for others includes striving to aid others in anyway one can, such as financial or emotional support, in the same way a person would desire others to aid them in their moment of need. Therefore, this love must be shown through actions not just words. Even when a muslim forbids evil and offers advice which contradicts the desire of others they should do so gently just like they would want others to advise them kindly.

As mentioned earlier, the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of eliminating all bad characteristics which contradict mutual love and care, such as envy. Envy is when a person desires to possess a specific blessing which is only obtainable when it is taken away from someone else. This attitude is a direct challenge to the distribution of blessings chosen by Allah, the Exalted. This is why it is a major sin and leads to the destruction of the envier's good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903. If a Muslim must

desire the lawful things others possess they should wish and supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, to grant them the same or similar thing without the other person losing the blessing. This type of jealousy is lawful and is praiseworthy in aspects of religion. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that muslims should only be jealous of a wealthy person who uses their wealth correctly. And be jealous of a knowledgeable person who uses their knowledge to benefit themselves and others.

A Muslim should not only love for others to obtain lawful worldly blessings but also for them to gain religious blessings in both worlds. In fact, when one wishes this for others it encourages them to strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This type of healthy competition is welcomed in Islam. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 26:

*“...So for this let the competitors compete.”*

This encouragement will also inspire a muslim to assess themselves in order to find and eliminate any faults in their character. When these two elements combine meaning, striving in sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and purifying one's character, it leads to success in both worlds.

A Muslim must therefore not only claim to love for others what they desire for themselves verbally but show it through their actions. It is hoped that the one who is concerned for others in this way will receive the concern of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930.

## Chapter 49 – Al Hujurat, Verse 12

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ  
وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُّحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن  
يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ  
رَّحِيمٌ

*“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of Repentance and Merciful.”*

***“O you who have believed...”***

True belief involves sincerity. 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“...avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking well about people is an aspect of worshipping Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Meaning, it is an aspect of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Interpreting things in a negative way often leads to sins such as backbiting and slander. In all cases a muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. Unfortunately, adopting a negative mind-set effects people from a family unit to a national level. For example, how many times has a nation gone to war over an assumption and suspicion? The vast majority of scandals which are found in the media are based on assumptions. Even laws have been created which support the use of assumptions and suspicion. This often leads to fractured and broken relationships as people with this mind-set always believe others are taking a dig at them through their words or actions. This prevents one from taking advice from others as they believe they are only being mocked by the one giving advice and it prevents one from giving advice as they believe the other person will not pay any attention to what they say. And a person will refrain from advising the one who possesses this negative mind-set as they believe it will only lead to an argument. This leads to other negative traits such as bitterness.

It is important for muslims to understand that even if they assume someone is taking a dig at them they should still accept their advice if it is based on

the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They should strive to interpret things where possible in a positive way which leads to a positive mentality. And a positive mindset leads to healthy relationships and feelings. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

*“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”*

***“...And do not spy...”***

This is when a person purposely enquires about people or a thing in order to find out things which do not concern them. This behaviour only leads to further sins, such as backbiting and slandering. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6064, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, specifically ordered muslims not to spy on one another and indicated that it prevents Muslims living in harmony. This habit will always block a Muslim from perfecting their faith as one cannot achieve this without staying away from the things which do not concern them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317.

Spying causes one to uncover the faults of others which according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546, leads to the exposure of one's own faults and their public disgrace.

It is therefore better for a Muslim to concentrate on things which concern them, such as rectifying their own faults. And the same way a Muslim would dislike people spying on them they should not spy on others.

***“...And do not spy...”***

Throughout the divine scriptures there are many examples which indicate that a person shall be treated according to how they act. For example, in one verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, declares that He will remember the person who remembers Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152.

*“So remember Me; I will remember you.”*

Another example is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 40:

*“...fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me]...”*

Finally, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever shows mercy to others will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is quite obvious that people strive in this material world as they desire peace of mind and contentment. In light of the earlier discussion, peace in one's life is often achieved when a person allows others to live in peace. If one reflects on their own life they will realise that people can be split into two categories: those who mind their business and allow others to live in peace and those who do not. It does not take a genius to figure out that those who let others live in peace are the ones who gain peace. Whereas, members of the other group never find peace irrespective of how many worldly blessings they may possess. This 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 3976, that a muslim cannot perfect their Islam until they avoid things which do not concern them. Those who ignore this advice and busy themselves with interfering with other people are the ones who never find peace. As they deprive others of peace in turn Allah, the Exalted, deprives them of it.

Therefore, a large step towards achieving peace of mind is to let others live in peace. It is important to note, this does not mean one should abandon commanding good and forbidding evil as this is an important duty. But it means that those things which are not sinful should be left alone as constantly chiding others on issues which are not unlawful only leads to enmity and the loss of peace in peoples' lives. There was a day and age when people loved being advised by others on all lawful and unlawful matters even if this meant they were being chided as they desired to reform themselves for the better. But that day has long passed. Nowadays, most people dislike being chided over the unlawful let alone those things which are lawful yet undesirable. So it is best to avoid this attitude if one desires to gain a bit of peace in their life.

***“...And do...backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6593, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of backbiting and slander.

Backbiting is when one criticizes someone behind their back in a way which would be displeasing to them even though it is the truth. Whereas, slander is similar to backbiting except that the statement is not true. These sins mainly involve speech but can include other things, such as using hand signals. These are major sins and backbiting has been compared to eating the flesh of a dead corpse in the main verse under discussion.

It is important to understand that these sins are worse than most of the sins which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted. This is because the sins between a person and Allah, the Exalted, will be forgiven by Him if the sinner sincerely repents. But Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive a backbiter or a slanderer until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then on Judgment day the good deeds of the backbiter/slanderer will be given to their victim as compensation and if needed the sins of the victim will be given to their backbiter/slanderer until justice is established. This may well cause the backbiter/slanderer to be hurled into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

The only times backbiting is lawful is if one is warning and protecting another person of harm or if a person is resolving a complaint against another with a third party, such as a legal case.

One should avoid backbiting and slandering by firstly gaining knowledge on the evil consequences of these major sins. Secondly, a person should only utter words which they would happily say in front of the person full well knowing they would not take it in an offensive way. Thirdly, a muslim should only utter words about another if they would not mind someone else saying those or similar words about them. Meaning, they should talk about others how they want people to talk about them. Finally, a muslim should concentrate on fixing their own faults and when done sincerely it will prevent them from backbiting and slandering others.

***“...And do...backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it...”***

A muslim must adopt the opposite characteristic and instead defend the honour of others.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever protects the honor of another will be protected from Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted.

Just like a muslim would desire others to protect their honor in their presence or absence they should protect the honor of others in their presence or absence also. In fact, loving for others what one desires for themselves is the characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. A muslim should protect the honor of others when anyone else speaks ill about them, such as backbiting or slander, irrespective of if what they are saying is true or not. This is an aspect of concealing the faults of others which leads to Allah, the Exalted, concealing their faults in both worlds. This is advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225. Behaving in such a manner is a clear proof of one's love for others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is a characteristic which leads to Paradise according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2688.

The main Hadith under discussion clearly shows that a muslim benefits from supporting others so even if they are too preoccupied from caring about others they should at least act in this manner for their own sake.

But the one who fails to defend the honor of others when they have the opportunity and strength to do so without fear of harm should fear that Allah, the Exalted, will not protect their honor in a time and place where it is being violated by others and especially, on the Day of Resurrection.

Finally, as the main Hadith under discussion advises protecting the honor of others it indirectly indicates the importance of not violating the honor of others. This is in fact the very sign of a true muslim and believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. Specifically, it advises that a true muslim and believer keeps their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others.

***“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only

use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

***“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 67, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the blood, property and honor of a muslim are sacred in Islam.

This Hadith, like many others, teaches muslims that success can only be obtained when one fulfills the rights of Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayers, and the rights of people. One without the other is not good enough.

A true believer and muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. Therefore, it is vital for muslims not to harm others through their actions or words.

A muslim must respect the possessions of others and not try to wrongfully acquire them for example, in a legal case. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 353, warns that someone who does this will go to Hell even if the thing they acquired was as insignificant as a twig of a tree. Muslims should

only use the possessions of others according to their wishes and return them in a way pleasing to its owner.

The honor of a muslim should not be violated through actions or speech, such as backbiting or slander. A muslim should instead defend the honor of others whether in their presence or absence as this will lead to their protection from the fire of Hell. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931.

To conclude, one should avoid wronging the self, possessions or honor of others by treating others exactly how they desire others to treat them. Just like one loves this for themselves they should love it for others and prove this through their actions and speech. This is the sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

***“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the bankrupt muslim is the one who accumulates many righteous deeds, such as fasting and prayer, but as they mistreated people their good deeds will be given to their victims and if necessary their victim's sins will be given to them on Judgement Day. This will lead to them being hurled into Hell.

It is important to understand that a muslim must fulfil two aspects of faith in order to achieve success. The first are the duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer. The second aspect is in respect to people which includes treating them kindly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true believer until they keep they physical and verbal harm away from the life and possessions of others.

It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, is infinitely forgiving meaning, He will forgive those who sincerely repent to Him. But He will not forgive the sins which involve other people until the victim forgives first. As people are not so forgiving a muslim should be fearful that those who they have wronged will exact revenge on them by taking away their precious good deeds on Judgment Day. Even if a muslim fulfils the rights of Allah,

the Exalted, they may still end up in Hell simply because they have wronged others. It is therefore important for muslims to strive to fulfil both aspects of their duties in order to obtain success in both worlds.

***“...And fear Allāh...”***

Piety/Fearing Allah, the Exalted, cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the

first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“...indeed, Allāh is Accepting of 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.

***“...indeed, Allāh is Accepting of Repentance...”***

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“...indeed, Allāh is...Merciful.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Most Merciful according to His infinite status. This attribute means that Allah, the Exalted, bestows countless favours on the creation and is always extremely kind to them. This same characteristic has been attributed to others such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 128:

*“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you [i.e., your guidance] and to the believers is kind and merciful.”*

When used in reference to the creation merciful means soft-hearted and compassionate. A muslim must adopt these qualities by looking at the creation through the eye of mercy and by treating them with mercy and compassion whether they are obedient or sinful. Many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 6030, indicate that the one who does not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. So it is vital for muslims to show mercy to all through their actions such as financial and physical help and through their words such as supplicating for them. Islam in fact rewards a muslim who shows mercy to all living things such as animals. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550. In addition, the mercy they show should not be selective or occasional instead they should strive to demonstrate mercy at all times with all of creation.

***“...And fear Allāh; indeed, Allāh is Accepting of Repentance and Merciful.”***

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He acts and treats His servant according to their perception of Him. This means if a muslim has good thoughts and expects good from Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will not disappoint them. Similarly, if a person harbours negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, such as believing they will not be forgiven then Allah, the Exalted, may act according to their belief.

It is important to note, there is a vast difference between true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which this Hadith refers to and wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is when one fails to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them. This is not true hope it is merely wishful thinking. This is like a farmer who fails to plant any seeds, fails to water their crop and still hopes to reap a large harvest. True hope is when one strives to obey Allah, the Exalted, and whenever they slip up they sincerely repent and then hope for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. This is like a farmer who plants seeds, waters their crop, dedicates effort to keeping the crop healthy and then hopes for a large harvest. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has summarised this explanation in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Generally speaking, a muslim should harbour more fear of Allah, the Exalted, during their life as it prevents sins which is superior to hope which inspires one to perform righteous deeds especially, the voluntary type. But during periods of illness and difficulty and especially at the time of death a muslim should have nothing but hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, even if they have spent their life disobeying Him as this has specifically been commanded by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2877.

## Chapter 49 – Al Hujurat, Verse 13

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا  
وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْتَظُّكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ  
خَبِيرٌ



*“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Aware.”*

***“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is Al Khaliq, which means the Creator, Al Baari which means the Maker and Al Musawwir which means the Fashioner.

The Creator is the One who brings something into existence. In reality, there is no Creator except Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One who creates without any aid from another. On other hand, an inventor only invents things through the aid of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 96:

*“While Allah created you and that which you do?”*

The Maker is the One who arranges all of the creation and prepares them for receiving the forms He has chosen for them which is linked to the next divine name mentioned earlier namely, the Fashioner.

The Creator makes things manifest. The Maker chooses their shape, appearance, and time of creation. The Fashioner fashions the creation according to His divine will.

After understanding these divine names a muslim must trust Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. If Allah, the Exalted, created and manages the entire universe He is more than capable in sorting out a person's problems. In addition, these names indicate that Allah, the Exalted, is the One who creates and chooses all things. So a muslim should not challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to nothing except disappointment. It is therefore better to submit obediently and patiently await relief knowing that Allah, the Exalted, only decrees the best for His servants even if this wisdom is not obvious to them. As a muslim is short sighted it is better to trust in the Creator whose wisdom has no limits. 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.”*

***“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another...”***

An aspect of this is through this recognition one can fulfil the rights of others, such as their relatives.

Upholding the ties of kinship is a vital aspect of Islam which cannot be abandoned if one desires success in both worlds. A true sign of one's faith is not spending all day worshipping Allah, the Exalted, in a Mosque but it is to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and to fulfill the rights of the creation. One of the most important rights of the creation is to uphold the ties of kinship. One can feign piety by dressing Islamically but they cannot deceive Allah, the Exalted. When one turns the pages of history they will always observe that the pious servants of Allah, the Exalted, maintained their ties of kinship. Even when their relative's mistreated them they still responded with kindness. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6525, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the

Exalted, will always aid the one who strives to maintain their ties of kinship even if their relatives make things difficult for them.

Replying good with good is not special whereas, replying good to evil is the sign of a sincere believer. The former behavior is even seen in animals. In most cases, when one treats an animal kindly it will in turn show affection back. It is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5991, that the one who truly upholds the bonds of kinship is the one who maintains ties even when their relatives sever them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was constantly terrorized by most of his relatives but he always showed kindness towards them.

It is commonly known that one cannot achieve success without the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. But in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5987, Allah, the Exalted, has clearly declared that He will sever bonds with the one who cuts their ties of kinship over worldly reasons. Bear in mind, this is true irrespective of how much one struggles to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship such as, the obligatory prayers. If Allah, the Exalted, cuts ties with a muslim how can they achieve His closeness and eternal success?

In addition, in most cases Allah, the Exalted, delays the punishment of sins in order to give people the opportunity to repent. But breaking the ties of kinship over worldly reasons is punished swiftly. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4212.

Unfortunately, severing ties is commonly seen in the world today. People easily sever ties of kinship over petty worldly reasons. They fail to recognize that any loss which occurs in the material world is temporary but if they are disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, they will face prolonged suffering in both worlds.

A reason for breaking the ties of kinship which is commonly seen within the Islamic community is when one reaches a higher social status through their occupation. This inspires them to discard their relatives as they believe they are not worthy of interacting with them anymore. Their love for their wealth and social status pushes them to the doors of paranoia which convinces them that their relatives only wish to take their wealth from them.

The Holy Quran indicates that these bonds will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 1:

*“...And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever over you, an Observer.”*

This verse also clearly indicates that one cannot obtain piety without upholding the ties of kinship. So those who believe they can achieve it through excess worship and fasting are proven wrong and must therefore change their behaviour.

Islam teaches muslims to uphold all ties of kinship by aiding their relatives in matters which are good whenever and wherever possible. They have been ordered to adopt a constructive mindset which unites relatives for the benefit of society rather than a destructive mentality which only causes divisions within families. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, creating divisions amongst people leads to one's destruction.

Those who sever their ties of kinship have been cursed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verses 22-23:

*“So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”*

How can one achieve their lawful desires in this world or in the next when they are encompassed with the curse of Allah, the Exalted, and deprived of His mercy?

Islam does not order one to go beyond their means in supporting their relatives nor does it ask them to sacrifice the limits of Allah, the Exalted, for their relatives as there is no obedience to the creation if it means

disobedience to the Creator. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. Therefore, one should never join their relatives in acts of evil. In this case, a muslim should command their relatives to do good and gently forbid them from evil while maintaining respect for them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

Countless benefits are obtained by the one who maintains the ties of kinship for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who maintains ties will be blessed with extra grace in their provision and in their life. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1693. This means that their provision irrespective of how little it is will be enough for them and it will provide them with peace of mind and body. Grace in life means they will find time to fulfill all their religious and worldly duties. These are two blessings muslims spend their whole life and wealth trying to obtain but many fail to recognize that Allah, the Exalted, has placed both of them in maintaining ties of kinship.

Maintaining ties of kinship is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered muslims to fulfill this vital duty even with their non-muslim relatives. A Hadith advising this is found in Sahih Muslim, number 2324.

One of the traps of the Devil is that he aims to create dissension between relatives and within society which leads to broken families and social divisions. His ultimate goal is to weaken Islam as a nation. Unfortunately, some have become infamous for harboring grudges which go on for decades and pass on from generation to generation. A person will treat a relative well for decades but over one mistake and argument the latter will vow never to speak to them again. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6526, that it is unlawful for a muslim to cut off ties from another muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. If this is the command regarding severing ties with a non-relative can one imagine the seriousness of severing ties with relatives? This question has been answered in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that the one who severs ties with a relative over worldly reasons will not enter Paradise.

One must reflect on the verses and Hadiths which discuss this important topic and realize that if after decades of sins Allah, the Exalted, does not close His doors or sever links with people why do people so easily turn their backs on their relatives over small worldly issues? This must change if one desires for their connection to Allah, the Exalted, to remain intact.

***“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or wealth. Even though, many muslims have erected these barriers such as social castes and sects thereby believing some are better than others Islam has clearly rejected this concept and declared that in this respect all people are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

***“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”***

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that nobility does not lie in one's lineage as all people are the descendants of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and he was made of dust. Therefore, people should give up boasting about their relatives and lineage.

It is important to understand that even though some ignorant muslims have adopted the attitude of other nations by creating castes and sects thereby believing some people are superior to others based on these groups Islam declared a simple criterion for superiority namely, piety. Meaning, the more a muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience the greater they are in rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

This verse destroys all other standards which have been created by ignorant people such as one's race, ethnicity, wealth, gender or social status.

In addition, if a muslim is proud of a pious person in their lineage they should correctly demonstrate this belief by praising Allah, the Exalted, and following in their footsteps. Boasting about others without following in their footsteps will not help someone in either this world or the next. This has been made clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2945.

Finally, the one who is proud of others but fails to follow in their footsteps is indirectly dishonoring them as the outside world will observe their bad character and assume their righteous ancestor behaved in the same manner. These people should therefore strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because of this reason. These are like those people who adopt the outward traditions and advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf yet, fail to adopt his inner character. The outside world will only think negatively about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they observe the bad character of these muslims.

***“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”***

Piety is achieved when one strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience. Unfortunately, the Devil has tricked many women into debating the status of women compared to men. Even though, Islam has granted women such honour as no other institution or faith ever has such as placing Paradise, which is the ultimate bliss, beneath the feet of a woman namely, one's mother. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3106. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3895, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the best man is the one who treats his wife the best. There are countless other examples. But the point to note is that women should not be bothered about comparing themselves to men as this is not what Allah, the Exalted, desires. Instead, women should strive to adopt piety and if they achieve it than they will become superior to every man or woman who possesses less piety than them. This is the benchmark which separates who is superior to whom. And it is clear from this verse that it is not based on one's gender. If one turns the pages of history they will observe great female muslims who concentrated on this important task instead of arguing and debating about the differences between men and women and as a result they became better than the vast majority of men and women. In reality, if muslim women were granted all the rights they dreamed of even then it would not make them superior to others until they adopted piety. This is quite evident when one observes the media and those who behave as they please. And this fact will be made crystal clear in the next world. Therefore, if a muslim desires to be superior to others they should seek it in piety not in arguing and debates.

***“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you...”***

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified

sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“...Indeed, Allāh is Knowing...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“...Indeed, 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 49 – Al Hujurat, Verses 14-16

﴿قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ ءَامَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا  
يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ  
أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا  
وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمْ  
الصَّادِقُونَ﴾

﴿قُلْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا  
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾

*“The bedouins say, “We have believed.” Say, “You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], ‘We have submitted,’ for faith has not yet entered your hearts. And if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not deprive you from your deeds of anything. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

*The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not but strive with their properties and their lives in the cause of Allah. It is those who are the truthful.*

*Say, "Would you acquaint Allah with your religion while Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and Allah is Knowing of all things?"*

***“The bedouins say, “We have believed.” Say, “You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], ‘We have submitted,’ for faith has not yet entered your hearts...Say, “Would you acquaint Allah with your religion while Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and Allah is Knowing of all things?””***

Generally speaking, someone who possesses good characteristics should not mention them unnecessarily and instead praise Allah, the Exalted, for granting those characteristics to them.

The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. And any evil they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bares this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themselves if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles himself before Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 215:

*“And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63, shows that humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

*“And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly...”*

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

*“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”*

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom’s worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

***“The bedouins say, “We have believed.” Say, “You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], ‘We have submitted,’ for faith has not yet entered your hearts. And if you obey Allāh and His Messenger, He will not deprive you from your deeds of anything...”...The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not...”***

These verses differentiate between a muslim and a believer. A muslim is someone who tries to follow the laws of Islam but their actions are often based on imitating others, such as their relatives, instead of being rooted in certainty of faith. For example, a muslim is like a patient who does not possess knowledge of medicine and submits to their doctor by taking the medicine they prescribe without possessing conviction that the medicine is good for them. They have merely followed what the doctor told them to do without real understanding of the medicine they have taken. The fact that they have taken the medicine proves they do believe the doctor. A second patient understands how medicines work and when they are prescribed medicine by their doctor they take it with conviction and understanding, as they are aware of how the medicine works in the body. This person also believes, as they took the medicine, but their belief is rooted in conviction not blind following of the doctor’s advice.

Even though a muslim is rightly guided yet they should strive to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to strengthen their faith as blind imitation of others is disliked by Islam.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

*“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”*

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five daily obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.



***“The bedouins say, “We have believed.” Say, “You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], ‘We have submitted,’ for faith has not yet entered your hearts. And if you obey Allāh and His Messenger, He will not deprive you from your deeds of anything...”...The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not...”***

These verses differentiate between a muslim and a believer. A muslim is someone who tries to follow the laws of Islam but their actions are often based on imitating others, such as their relatives, instead of being rooted in certainty of faith. Even though a muslim is rightly guided yet they should strive to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to strengthen their faith as ignorance leads to problems in both worlds.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu’ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“The bedouins say, “We have believed.” Say, “You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], ‘We have submitted,’ for faith has not yet entered your hearts. And if you obey Allāh and His Messenger, He will not deprive you from your deeds of anything...”...The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not...”***

These verses differentiate between a muslim and a believer. A muslim is someone who tries to follow the laws of Islam but their actions are often based on imitating others, such as their relatives, instead of being rooted in certainty of faith. Even though a muslim is rightly guided yet they should strive to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to strengthen their faith as ignorance leads to problems in both worlds.

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one’s certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described

as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice

versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“The bedouins say, “We have believed.” Say, “You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], ‘We have submitted,’ for faith has not yet entered your hearts. And if you obey Allāh and His Messenger, He will not deprive you from your deeds of anything...”...The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not...”***

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True belief involves sincerity.

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 Allah, the Exalted, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged

by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the

sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

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True belief involves using the blessings one has been granted, such as their wealth, 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.

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True belief involves using the blessings one has been granted, such as their wealth, 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.

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In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every situation is blessed for a believer. The only condition is that they need to respond to each situation they encounter while obeying Allah, the Exalted, specifically, patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease.

There are two aspects of life. One aspect are the situations people find themselves in whether they are times of ease or difficulties. The control of what situation a person faces is out of their hands. Allah, the Exalted, has decided this and there is no escaping them. Therefore, stressing over the situations one faces does not make sense as they are destined and

therefore inevitable. The other aspect is a person's reaction to each situation. This is in each person's control and this is what they are judged on for example, showing patience or impatience in a difficult situation. Therefore, a muslim must concentrate on their behaviour and reaction in each situation instead of stressing over being in a situation as this is unavoidable. If a muslim desires to succeed in both worlds they should assess each situation and always act in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. For example, in times of ease they must use the blessings they possess as prescribed by Islam which is true gratitude to 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]...”*

And in times of difficulty they must show patience knowing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind the choices. 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.”*

***“The bedouins say, “We have believed.” Say, “You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], ‘We have submitted,’ for faith has not yet entered your hearts. And if you obey Allāh and His Messenger, He will not deprive you from your deeds of anything...”...The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not but strive with their properties and their lives in the cause of Allāh...”***

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The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13, that a person cannot become a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This does not mean a muslim will lose their faith if they fail to adopt this characteristic. It means that a muslim's faith will not be complete until they act on this advice. This Hadith also indicates that a muslim will not perfect their faith until they also dislike for others what they dislike for themselves. This is supported by another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586.

It advises that the muslim nation is like one body. If one part of the body is in pain the rest of the body shares the pain. This mutual feeling includes loving and hating for others what one loves and hates for themselves.

A muslim can only achieve this status when their heart is free from evil traits, such as envy. These evil traits will always cause one to desire better for themselves. So in reality, this Hadith is an indication that one should purify their heart by adopting good characteristics, such as being forgiving, and eliminate evil traits, such as envy. This is only possible through learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for muslims to understand that desiring good for others will cause them to lose out on good things. The treasury of Allah, the Exalted, has no limits so there is no need to adopt a selfish and greedy mentality.

Desiring good for others includes striving to aid others in anyway one can, such as financial or emotional support, in the same way a person would desire others to aid them in their moment of need. Therefore, this love must be shown through actions not just words. Even when a muslim forbids evil and offers advice which contradicts the desire of others they should do so gently just like they would want others to advise them kindly.

As mentioned earlier, the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of eliminating all bad characteristics which contradict mutual love and care, such as envy. Envy is when a person desires to possess a specific blessing which is only obtainable when it is taken away from someone else. This attitude is a direct challenge to the distribution of blessings chosen by Allah, the Exalted. This is why it is a major sin and leads to the destruction of the envier's good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903. If a Muslim must desire the lawful things others possess they should wish and supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, to grant them the same or similar thing without the other person losing the blessing. This type of jealousy is lawful and is praiseworthy in aspects of religion. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that muslims should only be jealous of a wealthy person who uses their wealth correctly. And be jealous of a knowledgeable person who uses their knowledge to benefit themselves and others.

A Muslim should not only love for others to obtain lawful worldly blessings but also for them to gain religious blessings in both worlds. In fact, when one wishes this for others it encourages them to strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This type of healthy competition is welcomed in Islam. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 26:

*“...So for this let the competitors compete.”*

This encouragement will also inspire a muslim to assess themselves in order to find and eliminate any faults in their character. When these two elements combine meaning, striving in sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and purifying one's character, it leads to success in both worlds.

A Muslim must therefore not only claim to love for others what they desire for themselves verbally but show it through their actions. It is hoped that the one who is concerned for others in this way will receive the concern of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930.

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In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed the importance of truthfulness and avoiding lies. The first part advises that truthfulness leads to righteousness which in turn leads to Paradise. When a person persists on truthfulness they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a truthful person.

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is

judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

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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.”*

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Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“...And if you obey Allāh and His Messenger, He will not deprive you from your deeds of anything...”***

This indicates the importance of adhering to the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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 if you obey Allāh and His Messenger, He will not deprive you from your deeds of anything...”***

This indicates the importance of adhering to the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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.

***“...Indeed, Allāh is Forgiving...”***

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from 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 act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“...Indeed, Allāh is...Merciful.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Most Merciful according to His infinite status. This attribute means that Allah, the Exalted, bestows countless favours on the creation and is always extremely kind to them. This same characteristic has been attributed to others such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 128:

*“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you [i.e., your guidance] and to the believers is kind and merciful.”*

When used in reference to the creation merciful means soft-hearted and compassionate. A muslim must adopt these qualities by looking at the creation through the eye of mercy and by treating them with mercy and compassion whether they are obedient or sinful. Many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 6030, indicate that the one who does not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. So it is vital for muslims to show mercy to all through their actions such as financial and physical help and through their words such as supplicating for them. Islam in fact rewards a muslim who shows mercy to all living things such as animals. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550. In addition, the mercy they show should not be selective or occasional instead they should strive to demonstrate mercy at all times with all of creation.

***“...while Allāh knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and Allāh is Knowing of all things.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

## Chapter 49 – Al Hujurat, Verses 17-18 of 18

يَمُنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا تَمُنُوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُ  
عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ  
﴿١٨﴾

*“They [the Bedouins] consider it a favor to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] that they have accepted Islam. Say, “Do not consider your Islam a favor to me. Rather, Allah has conferred favor upon you that He has guided you to the faith, if you should be truthful.”*

*Indeed, Allah knows the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth.  
And Allah is Seeing of what you do.”*

***“They [the Bedouins] consider it a favor to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] that they have accepted Islam. Say, “Do not consider your Islam a favor to me. Rather, Allah has conferred favor upon you that He has guided you to the faith, if you should be truthful.””***

A muslim must understand that their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or lack thereof will never change His infinite status in anyway as no one can benefit or harm Him. Similarly, obeying or disobeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, does not benefit or harm him as his mission was to deliver the message of Islam and give the people a practical role model to follow, a mission which he fulfilled to perfection. A person’s faith only benefits themselves as they will gain reward and avoid punishment in both worlds through actualising it. Understanding this reality prevents pride and encourages one to adopt humility.

The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. And any evil they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and

inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bares this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themselves if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches Muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles themselves before Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 215:

*“And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63, shows that humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

*“And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly...”*

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

*“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”*

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom's worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

***“They [the Bedouins] consider it a favor to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] that they have accepted Islam. Say, “Do not consider your Islam a favor to me. Rather, Allah has conferred favor upon you that He has guided you to the faith, if you should be truthful.””***

A muslim must understand that their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or lack thereof will never change His infinite status in anyway as no one can benefit or harm Him. Similarly, obeying or disobeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, does not benefit or harm him as his mission was to deliver the message of Islam and give the people a practical role model to follow, a mission which he fulfilled to perfection. A person’s faith only benefits themselves as they will gain reward and avoid punishment in both worlds through actualising it. Understanding this reality prevents pride and encourages one to adopt humility.

It is important to understand that the prohibitions and commands of Allah, the Exalted, do not exist to make people's life harder. They only exist in order to benefit people in both this world and in the next even if these benefits are not apparent to people. For example, the negative effects of alcohol, which science has proven, was not always apparent such as its negative effect on the organs of the body. It only became unlawful in Islam to protect people from this and other harms. In addition, It is an aspect of faith to accept something without understanding its wisdoms. If all the wisdoms of the commands and prohibitions were made apparent then it would not allow muslims to possess complete faith. Allah, the Exalted, does not benefit from these commands and prohibitions only people do.

***“...Rather, Allah has conferred favor upon you that He has guided you to the faith, if you should be truthful.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who guides His servants to what is beneficial for them in both worlds and guides them away from anything which harms them. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verse 8:

*“And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness.”*

The muslim who understands this divine name will seek guidance in worldly and religious matters from none other than Allah, the Exalted, through the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever seeks guidance from anything else will not find lasting success.

A muslim should act on this divine name by guiding others towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and what is beneficial to them in both worldly and religious matters according to their knowledge. This will ensure they become a true believer meaning, the one who loves for others what they desire for themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

***“Indeed, Allāh knows the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth...”***

This includes one’s hidden intention.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that those who perform deeds for the sake of people, such as showing off, instead of doing them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, will be told to gain their reward on Judgment Day from the people they acted for which in reality is not possible to do.

It is important to understand that the foundation of all deeds and even Islam itself is one’s intention. It is the very thing which Allah, the Exalted, judges people on according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A muslim should ensure they perform all religious and useful worldly actions for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward from Him in both worlds. A sign of this correct mentality is that this person neither expects nor desires people to appreciate or show gratitude to them for the deeds they perform. If one desires this then it indicates their incorrect intention.

In addition, acting with the correct intention prevents sadness and bitterness as the one who acts for the sake of people will eventually encounter ungrateful people who will make them annoyed and bitter as

they feel they wasted their effort and time. Unfortunately, this is seen in parents and relatives as they often fulfill their duties towards their children and relatives for their sake instead of for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. But the one who acts for the sake of Allah, the exalted, will fulfill all their duties towards others such as their children and never become bitter or enraged when they fail to show gratitude towards them. This attitude leads to peace of mind and general happiness as they know Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their righteous deed and will reward them for it. This is the way all muslims must act otherwise they may well be left empty handed on the Day of Judgment.

***“Indeed, Allāh knows the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“...And Allāh is Seeing of what you do.”***

Nothing irrespective of its size and location is out of the reach of the divine sight and hearing of Allah, the Exalted.

The muslim who understands this divine name will be extremely cautious in their actions and speech. The same way one becomes vigilant over their actions when they are in the hearing and seeing range of someone they respect or fear a true muslim will be vigilant over their behaviour knowing no word or action escapes Allah, the Exalted. In fact, acting in this way is the high level of faith which has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. If one remains steadfast on this behaviour then they will eventually reach excellence of faith whereby they perform acts, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted, constantly watching their inner and outer being. This attitude will prevent sins and encourage one to sincerely perform righteous deeds.

In addition, this divine name encourages muslims never to give up hope whenever they face a difficulty thereby believing no one is aware or even cares about them. Allah, the Exalted, undoubtedly hears and sees their distress and will respond at the time which is best for His servant. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

*“And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you...”*

A muslim should act on this divine name by using these two senses in the way commanded by Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, one should not observe unlawful and vain things nor should they listen to unlawful and vain things. They should instead use them in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to avoid vain things as they are often the first step to the unlawful. This is achieved by acting on the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502. It advises that when one fulfils the commands of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to the obligatory duties and then strives in voluntary righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, He empowers their senses such as their sight and hearing so that they only use them in accordance to His desire and pleasure.

***“...And Allāh is Seeing of what you do.”***

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of Ihsan, which can be translated to mean excellence. This excellence refers to one's conduct and behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Acting with excellence has been mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as chapter 10 Yunus, verse 26:

*“For them who have done excellent is the best [reward] - and extra...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has explained this verse in Hadiths found in Sahih Muslim, numbers 449 and 450. The word extra in this verse refers to when the inhabitants of Paradise will be blessed with the divine vision of Allah, the Exalted. This reward befits the muslim who acts with excellence. As excellence means to lead one's life as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted, observing their outer and inner being at all times. A person who can observe a powerful authority watching them will never misbehave out of awe of them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised someone to always behave as if they were constantly being observed by a righteous man they respected. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, number 5539.

Whoever acts in this manner will very rarely commit sins and always hasten towards good deeds. This attitude creates the fear of Allah, the Exalted, and acts as a shield from the fire of trials in this world and the fire of Hell in the hereafter. This vigilance will ensure one not only fulfills all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, but it also encourages them to fulfill their responsibilities towards the creation. The peak of which is to sincerely treat others with kindness. This person will fulfill the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 251, which advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This level of excellence ensures one acts with the right intention, which is the foundation of faith according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Success is guaranteed for the one who performs good deeds and demonstrates good behavior with the right intention namely, to please Allah, the Exalted. The more excellent a person acts the stronger their faith becomes until they become a muslim who is far from heedlessness and is always struggling to beautify their hereafter and worldly life according to the teachings of Islam.

It is feared that the opposite of this reward will be given to those who turned away from Allah, the Exalted. As they lived without fearing the all-encompassing gaze of Allah, the Exalted, they will be veiled from seeing Him in the hereafter. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 15:

*“No! Indeed, from their Lord, that Day, they will be partitioned.”*

Those who fail to reach the level of acting as if they witness Allah, the Exalted, must act on the second part of the advice given in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning. This person should sincerely believe that Allah, the Exalted, is constantly observing them. Even though this state is lower in rank than the one who acts as if they observe Allah, the Exalted, none the less, it is a great way of adopting true fear of Allah, the Exalted. As mentioned earlier this attitude will prevent one from committing sins and encourage them towards good deeds. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in Imam Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, number 7935, the one who strives to adopt this mentality will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

The divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, is mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 4:

*"...He is with you wherever you are. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing."*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised to adopt the true awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, in many Hadiths. For example, in one divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He is with whoever remembers Him. This is the reason why it has been reported in Hilyat Al Awliya, volume 1, pages 84 and 85, about the Commander of the Faithful, Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, that he shied away from the glitter and pomp of the material world and only found solace in the

lonely night. Meaning, he sought the companionship of Allah, the Exalted, rather than the companionship of people.

Adopting the awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, not only prevents sins and encourages good deeds but it also prevents loneliness and depression. A person is very rarely affected by mental health issues when they are constantly surrounded by a person who loves them and aids them. No one loves the creation more than Allah, the Exalted, and there is no doubt that He is the source of all aid. Therefore, acting with excellence benefits one's faith, actions, emotional state and the wider society.

A muslim must avoid becoming like those who treat Allah, the Exalted, as the most insignificant of those who observe them. This is a serious spiritual illness which leads to all types of sins and evil behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Chapter 50 – Qaf, Verse 1

قَافٍ وَالْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ ١

“Qāf. By the honored Quran.”

## **“Qāf...”**

Even though the actual meaning of these verses found within the Holy Quran are unknown using letters from the alphabet does indicate the importance of education and knowledge.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“...By the honored Quran.”***

One will gain honour and success in both worlds when they fulfil the rights of the Holy Quran.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“...By the honored Quran.”***

The Holy Quran possesses an uncountable amount of qualities which separates it from any other worldly book. This aspect of the Holy Quran is so intense that it cannot even be explained or discussed over countless lifetimes. But a few of these qualities will be mentioned here. First of all, in the Holy Quran, Allah, the Exalted, has given an open challenge to the entire universe (not just people) and not only a challenge to those who were present when this divine revelation was revealed but to all of creation till the end of time. The challenge being if the people believed the Holy Quran was not a divine revelation from Allah, the Exalted, then they should produce a chapter that can rival a chapter of the Holy Quran. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 23:

*“And if you are in some doubt, concerning what We sent down upon Our special devotee, then bring one chapter like it, and call upon all your helpers beside Allah, if you are truthful.”*

There is no book on the entire planet that can and has given this type of open challenge. But over 1400 years ago the Holy Quran gave this challenge to the entire universe and to this day this challenge has not been won by the non-Muslims nor will it ever be God willing.

Another quality of the Holy Quran is that it stated the outcome of future events. But the more amazing thing about these statements is that the outcomes seemed impossible at the time. For example chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 28:

*“It is He Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth that he may make it prevail over all other religions And Sufficient is Allah as witness.”*

When this verse was revealed the entire city of Mecca was Islam so when the people of Mecca heard this verse, unfortunately for them, they believed that Islam was too feeble and would therefore not survive long and certainly would not spread beyond the borders of Mecca let alone the entire world. But within a some years Allah, the Exalted, fulfilled this promise.

Another example of how the Holy Quran prophesied a future event which was unimaginable at the time is found in chapter 30 Ar Rum, verses 2-5:

*“The Romans have been subdued. In the nearby land and after their subjugation they will soon overcome. In a few years. The command is of Allah only before and after. And on that day the believers shall rejoice. With the help of Allah, He helps whom He pleases. And He is the Might, and Merciful.”*

These verses of the Holy Quran were revealed during a time where the Romans (Christians) were at war with the Persians (Fire worshippers). This war has been confirmed by many authentic historic books. At this particular time the Persians were on the verge of winning the war. At one point Rome itself was surrounded by the Persians. But Allah, the Exalted, stated that the Romans would eventually reign victorious. The non-Muslims of Mecca who themselves were idol worshippers favoured the Persians and agreed with the majority that it was impossible for the Romans to win. But Allah, the Exalted, as always proved these verses true and allowed the Romans victory.

A final example which appeals to the scientists of the world is seen in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 33:

*“And it is He Who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon. Each one is floating in a circumference.”*

For centuries scientists have fought over theories on how exactly the solar system is arranged e.g. whether the sun remains still and the Earth rotates around or vice versa. Only relatively recently it has been proven by scientists from all different faiths and backgrounds that each object; sun, moon and the Earth all rotate on their own axes and rotate around each other in a set orbit. But Allah, the Exalted, declared this over 1400 years ago. All the science related verses of the Holy Quran are slowly being proven by scientists today. This is a huge piece of evidence that proves

that the Holy Quran are the words of the One and only true God, Allah, the Exalted, who has created this universe and everything in it, because only a Creator can truly explain his creations.

Even though many commands of the Holy Quran may not be understood by people does not mean they are incorrect. Certain verses of the Holy Quran whose wisdom was hidden to man became apparent when society reached a certain level of development. As the whole Holy Quran is a book of wisdom and guidance it must be accepted irrespective if one understands its commands or not. This situation is just like a child who is suffering from a cold and desires ice cream but is not given it by their parent. The child will continue to cry without understanding the wisdom behind but those that possess knowledge will agree with the parent even though outwardly it appears as if the decision of the parent is wronging the child.

When studying the Holy Quran one will realize that it contains different levels of superiority through both obvious and subtle meanings that it discusses. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 1:

*“...[This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise and Aware.”*

The expressions in it are unparalleled and its meanings are explained in a simple straight forward way. Its verses are extremely eloquent and no other text can surpass it. The Holy Quran also mentioned the stories of the previous nations in detail even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not educated in history. It commanded every type of good and forbade every type of evil, those that affect an individual and those that affect an entire society so that peace and security can spread throughout homes and society. The Holy Quran is free from exaggerations, lies or falsehood unlike poems and stories. All the verses, whether short or long, in the Holy Quran are beneficial. Even when the same story is repeated in the Holy Quran different important lessons can be learned from it. Unlike all other books the Holy Quran does not become boring when it is repeatedly recited and a seeker of truth never gets fed up of studying it. The Holy Quran not only provides warnings and promises but supports them with unshakeable and clear proofs. When the Holy Quran discusses anything which can seem abstract, such as adopting patience, it always provides an easy and practical way of implementing it. It encourages one to fulfil the purpose of their creation and prepare for the eternal hereafter in a simple yet profound way. It makes the straight path clear and appealing to the one who desires true success in both worlds. The knowledge within it is timeless and can be applied to every society and age. It is a healing for every emotional, economical and physical difficulty when it is understood and applied correctly. It is the cure for every problem an individual or an entire society can ever encounter. One only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the societies which implemented the teachings of the Holy Quran correctly in order to understand its all encompassing benefits. Centuries have passed yet not even a single letter has been edited in the Holy Quran as Allah, the Exalted, promised to safeguard it. No other book in history possesses this quality. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 9:

*“Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [i.e., the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian.”*

This is undoubtedly the greatest and timeless miracle of Allah, the Exalted, granted to His final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But the only one who will benefit from it is the one who seeks the truth whereas the seekers of their desires will only find it difficult to hear and follow. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

## Chapter 50 – Qaf, Verses 2-5

بَلْ عَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَقَالَ الْكٰفِرُونَ هٰذَا شَيْءٌ  
عَجِيبٌ ﴿٢﴾

أَءِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا ۖ ذٰلِكَ رَجَعٌ بَعِيدٌ ﴿٣﴾

قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ الْاَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ ۖ وَعِندَنَا كِتٰبٌ حٰفِیظٌ ﴿٤﴾

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَهُمْ فِيْ اَمْرٍ مَّرِیجٍ ﴿٥﴾

*“But they wonder that there has come to them a warner from among themselves, and the disbelievers say, “This is an amazing thing.*

*When we have died and have become dust, [we will return to life]? That is a distant [i.e., unlikely] return.”*

*We know what the earth diminishes [i.e., consumes] of them, and with Us is a retaining record.*

*But they denied the truth when it came to them, so they are in a confused condition.”*

***“But they wonder that there has come to them a warner from among themselves...”***

The non-muslims found it hard to accept that a Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, would be human instead of some other type of creature, such as an Angel. As a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, is sent to humans it does not make sense to send them as anything else, such as Angels. The very function of a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, is for the people to obtain a practical example of how they must behave in every aspect of their lives. An Angel does not experience what humans feel, such as fatigue, so the people would not be able to relate to their Angel Prophet, peace be upon him, and this would give them an excuse in front of Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgement.

Is there anything strange about appointing a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, in order to guide mankind? For if people are found drowned in misguidance and are oblivious to the truth, what then is truly strange: that their Creator and Lord should make arrangements to guide them or let them continue in misguidance and error? And if divine guidance is made available to human beings, does it not make sense that those who accept it and follow it, rather than those who reject it, deserve to be held in honour by Allah, the Exalted? The behaviour of those who express their astonishment at this is in fact astonishing.

***“But they wonder that there has come to them a warner from among themselves...”***

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is for them to be sincerely obeyed and followed. 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.

***“But they wonder that there has come to them a warner from among themselves...”***

This verse indicates the importance of implementing the teachings of Islam as reminders namely; glad tidings and warnings only benefit the person who acts on them. For example, those who ignore road hazard signs are often the ones who end up in dangerous situations. But those who act upon these hazards signs are protected from this danger. The glad tidings indicate the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon lead to the gardens of Paradise. And the warnings are the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon protects one from divine punishment such as Hell.

***“But they wonder that there has come to them a warner from among themselves...”***

Their statement indicates their arrogance.

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 the disbelievers say, "This is an amazing thing. When we have died and have become dust, [we will return to life]? That is a distant [i.e., unlikely] return." We know what the earth diminishes [i.e., consumes] of them, and with Us is a retaining record. But they denied the truth when it came to them, so they are in a confused condition.”***

When Allah, the Exalted, created mankind from nothing, resurrecting them from dust and bones will be easier for Him. In addition, the fact that Allah, the Exalted, knows every particle of their being and its location makes the resurrection easier. If modern technology can separate different matters and substances why would it be difficult for Allah, the Exalted, the One who created the matters and substances from nothing in the first place, to do so?

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are

countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot

take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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.

***“...and the disbelievers say, "This is an amazing thing. When we have died and have become dust, [we will return to life]? That is a distant [i.e., unlikely] return." We know what the earth diminishes [i.e., consumes] of them, and with Us is a retaining record. But they denied the truth when it came to them, so they are in a confused condition.”***

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They, and even people today, deny the resurrection not because it does not seem possible but because acknowledging it will mean that they will have to face the consequences of their actions on Judgement Day. This will force them to live their life according to a specific code of conduct instead of according to their whims and desires. As this is unacceptable to them they make excuses to reject the process of resurrection. In respect to the non-muslims of Mecca, their excuses included labelling the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a magician, a poet, a madman and a soothsayer. Even in this they could not make their minds up.

The non-Muslims of Mecca spent their lives with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and full-well knew he was

no liar or poet. As they were masters of the Arabic language they full-well knew that the Holy Quran was not the words of a man.

For example, one of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, Walid Bin Mughira, once held a meeting with the other non-Muslim leaders of Mecca during the time of the Holy Pilgrimage. The Holy Pilgrimage did exist before the coming of Islam but the correct practices of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been completely changed. He advised the other leaders that soon many people would enter Mecca because of the Holy Pilgrimage and they will come across the message of Islam so they needed to unanimously agree on what to say about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to deter people from accepting Islam. Someone advised that they should label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a soothsayer. But Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not a soothsayer as he did not possess any of their crazy characteristics therefore people would not accept this. Another advised that they should tell people the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was crazy and was possessed by evil spirits. But Walid replied that it was obvious this was not true as these signs were not apparent in him. Finally, someone advised to label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a poet so that people would not pay attention to what he says. But again Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Quran or his speech were not poetry as the Arabs were masters of poetry. Walid advised everyone to claim that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a sorcerer whose goals were to cause separation between people and their religion and divisions within families. After agreeing to this plan they dispersed and waited for people to flood into Mecca for the Holy Pilgrimage and warned them not to pay attention to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they claimed he was a sorcerer. This has been

discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 362.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was reciting truthful historical accounts and beneficial lessons even though he was unlettered and had not studied the previous divine scriptures, which the non-Muslims of Mecca full well knew, was a clear sign of his Prophethood.

This was supported by the fact that they themselves testified to his sincerity and honesty. In fact, during his childhood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always under the protection of Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the evils that were widespread during the age of ignorance: the time before Islam. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached maturity he was the finest person among his people, the best of them in character and repute, the best of neighbours, the most prudent, the most honest in speech and most trustworthy. He was completely removed from immorality and other evil characteristics. Because of this he became known among the people of Mecca as Al Amin, the trustworthy. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, The Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 180.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spent his entire life amongst the non-Muslims of Mecca was enough of a proof of his declaration of Prophethood. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, invited the non-Muslims of

Mecca to embrace Islam he used his 40 years amongst them as proof that he was speaking the truth. This evidence was undeniable even by the non-Muslims. This incident is recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4553. Only the arrogance of some prevented them from submitting to the truth. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

*“...for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?”*

***“...and the disbelievers say, "This is an amazing thing. When we have died and have become dust, [we will return to life]? That is a distant [i.e., unlikely] return." We know what the earth diminishes [i.e., consumes] of them, and with Us is a retaining record. But they denied the truth when it came to them, so they are in a confused condition.”***

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A muslim must not practically behave like this by failing to prepare for the Day of Judgement, even if they believe in it internally. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

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A muslim must not practically behave like this by failing to prepare for the Day of Judgement, even if they believe in it internally. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

Chapter 50 – Qaf, Verses 6-11

أَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَوْقَهُمْ كَيْفَ بَنَيْنَاهَا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا وَمَا لَهَا  
مِنْ زُوجٍ ﴿٦﴾

وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ  
بِهَيْجٍ ﴿٧﴾

تَبَصَّرَةٌ وَذِكْرَىٰ لِكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُّنِيبٍ ﴿٨﴾

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُّبْرَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَحَبَّ  
الْحَصِيدِ ﴿٩﴾

وَالنَّخْلَ بَاسِقَاتٍ لَهَا طَلْعٌ نَضِيدٌ ﴿١٠﴾

رَزَقًا لِلْعِبَادِ وَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ بَلَدَةً مَيِّتًا كَذَلِكَ الْخُرُوجُ ﴿١١﴾

*“Have they not looked at the heaven above them - how We structured it and adorned it and [how] it has no rifts?*

*And the earth - We spread it out and cast therein firmly set mountains and made grow therein [something] of every beautiful kind.*

*Giving insight and a reminder for every servant who turns [to Allah].*

*And We have sent down blessed rain from the sky and made grow thereby gardens and grain from the harvest.*

*And lofty palm trees having fruit arranged in layers.*

*As provision for the servants, and We have given life thereby to a dead land. Thus is the emergence [i.e., resurrection].”*

***“Have they not looked at the heaven above them - how We structured it and adorned it and [how] it has no rifts? And the earth - We spread it out and cast therein firmly set mountains and made grow therein [something] of every beautiful kind. Giving insight and a reminder for every servant who turns [to Allah].”***

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

In addition, when Allah, the Exalted, created and constantly maintains the vast universe with ease then why is it strange to accept that He can resurrect a tiny human?

Finally, everything within the Heavens and Earth indicates that everything which has a beginning has a specified end, such as the coming and going of the day and night, the weeks, months, years and seasons. All of these point towards the ultimate end which all people must prepare for namely, the Day of Judgement.

As indicated by the main verses under discussion, the one who reflects on the things discussed will turn towards the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in preparation for the Day of Judgement. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him.

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.

***“Have they not looked at the heaven above them - how We structured it and adorned it and [how] it has no rifts? And the earth - We spread it out and cast therein firmly set mountains and made grow therein [something] of every beautiful kind. Giving insight and a reminder for every servant who turns [to Allah].”***

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

In addition, when Allah, the Exalted, created and constantly maintains the vast universe with ease then why is it strange to accept that He can resurrect a tiny human?

Finally, everything within the Heavens and Earth indicates that everything which has a beginning has a specified end, such as the coming and going of the day and night, the weeks, months, years and seasons. All of these point towards the ultimate end which all people must prepare for namely, the Day of Judgement.

As indicated by the main verses under discussion, the one who reflects on the things discussed will turn towards the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in preparation for the Day of Judgement. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. 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.

***“Giving insight and a reminder for every servant who turns [to Allah].”***

Generally speaking, it is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*“...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying],  
"Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a  
thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.””*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“Giving insight and a reminder for every servant who turns [to Allah].”***

Generally speaking, it is important for a muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

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

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden message a muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the

Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

***“Giving insight and a reminder for every servant who turns [to Allah].”***

Generally speaking, ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by the signs of Allah, the Exalted.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“Giving insight and a reminder for every servant who turns [to Allah].”***

Generally speaking, this leads to certainty of faith, which in turn increases one’s sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted.

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one’s certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“Giving insight and a reminder for every servant who turns [to Allah].”***

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also

granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“And We have sent down blessed rain from the sky and made grow thereby gardens and grain from the harvest. And lofty palm trees having fruit arranged in layers. As provision for the servants...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Creator and Allocator of provision to the entire creation which they need to preserve their physical and spiritual constitutions. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the provision of the entire creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

The one who understands this divine name will rely on Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them as He has planned for them before they were created. They will prove this reliance by striving to gain lawful provision as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, while refraining from anything which is unlawful and doubtful.

It is important to note that as people require physical provision in the form of food and drink. Similarly, the soul of a muslim requires provision also. This provision strengthens it and leads it to eternal bliss. This provision is in the form of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The foundation of all this is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Therefore, muslims should strive to gain this important provision of the soul as well as provision for their physical body. Two elements should be remembered in this respect. Do not exert unlawful and unnecessary efforts in gaining one's guaranteed provision. And do not misuse or waste the provision one gains.

A muslim, should act on this divine name by fulfilling their duty by providing for their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. This includes providing them with both physical and spiritual provision through education. A muslim should also do the same for the needy according to their capacity without fearing poverty for themselves. They should remember the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893, which advises that Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the needs of the muslim who takes care of the needs of others.

***“And We have sent down blessed rain from the sky and made grow thereby gardens and grain from the harvest. And lofty palm trees having fruit arranged in layers. As provision for the servants, and We have given life thereby to a dead land. Thus is the emergence [resurrection].”***

The same way Allah, the Exalted, gives life to a barren land through rain, He will give life to the dead on the Day of Resurrection.

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face

some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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 50 – Qaf, Verses 12-14

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَأَصْحَابُ الرَّسِّ وَثَمُودُ ﴿١٢﴾

وَعَادُ وَفِرْعَوْنُ وَإِخْوَانُ لُوطٍ ﴿١٣﴾

وَأَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ وَقَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ كُلٌّ كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ وَعِيدِ ﴿١٤﴾

*“The people of Noah denied before them [people of Mecca], and the companions of the well and Thamūd.*

*And ‘Aad and Pharaoh and the brothers [i.e., people] of Lot [denied].*

*And the companions of the thicket and the people of Tubba‘. All denied the messengers, so My threat was justly fulfilled.”*

***“The people of Noah denied before them [people of Mecca], and the companions of the well and Thamūd. And ‘Aad and Pharaoh and the brothers [i.e., people] of Lot [denied]. And the companions of the thicket and the people of Tubba’. All denied the messengers...”***

One must avoid sharing the fate of these nations by practically and sincerely obeying and following 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.

***“The people of Noah denied before them [people of Mecca], and the companions of the well and Thamūd. And ‘Aad and Pharaoh and the brothers [i.e., people] of Lot [denied]. And the companions of the thicket and the people of Tubba’. All denied the messengers, so My threat was justly fulfilled.”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed

her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“The people of Noah denied before them [people of Mecca], and the companions of the well and Thamūd. And ‘Aad and Pharaoh and the brothers [i.e., people] of Lot [denied]. And the companions of the thicket and the people of Tubba’. All denied the messengers, so My threat was justly fulfilled.”***

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying],  
"Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a  
thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“The people of Noah denied before them [people of Mecca], and the companions of the well and Thamūd. And ‘Aad and Pharaoh and the brothers [i.e., people] of Lot [denied]. And the companions of the thicket and the people of Tubba’. All denied the messengers, so My threat was justly fulfilled.”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their

victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“The people of Noah denied before them [people of Mecca], and the companions of the well and Thamūd. And ‘Aad and Pharaoh and the brothers [i.e., people] of Lot [denied]. And the companions of the thicket and the people of Tubba’. All denied the messengers, so My threat was justly fulfilled.”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

## Chapter 50 – Qaf, Verse 15

أَفَعَيْنَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْأَوَّلِ بَلْ هُمْ فِي لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ﴿١٥﴾

*“Did We fail in the first creation? But they are in confusion over a new creation.”*

***“Did We fail in the first creation? But they are in confusion over a new creation.”***

When Allah, the Exalted, created mankind from nothing, resurrecting them from dust and bones will be easier for Him.

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But

this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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 50 – Qaf, Verse 16

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ  
مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ ﴿١٦﴾

*“And We have already created man and know what his soul whispers to him, and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein.”*

***“And We have already created man...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is Al Khaliq, which means the Creator, Al Baari which means the Maker and Al Musawwir which means the Fashioner.

The Creator is the One who brings something into existence. In reality, there is no Creator except Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One who creates without any aid from another. On other hand, an inventor only invents things through the aid of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 96:

*“While Allah created you and that which you do?”*

The Maker is the One who arranges all of the creation and prepares them for receiving the forms He has chosen for them which is linked to the next divine name mentioned earlier namely, the Fashioner.

The Creator makes things manifest. The Maker chooses their shape, appearance, and time of creation. The Fashioner fashions the creation according to His divine will.

After understanding these divine names a muslim must trust Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. If Allah, the Exalted, created and manages the entire universe He is more than capable in sorting out a person's problems. In addition, these names indicate that Allah, the Exalted, is the One who creates and chooses all things. So a muslim should not challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to nothing except disappointment. It is therefore better to submit obediently and patiently await relief knowing that Allah, the Exalted, only decrees the best for His servants even if this wisdom is not obvious to them. As a muslim is short sighted it is better to trust in the Creator whose wisdom has no limits. 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 We...know what his soul whispers to him, and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein.”***

This includes one's hidden intention.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that those who perform deeds for the sake of people, such as showing off, instead of doing them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, will be told to gain their reward on Judgment Day from the people they acted for which in reality is not possible to do.

It is important to understand that the foundation of all deeds and even Islam itself is one's intention. It is the very thing which Allah, the Exalted, judges people on according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A muslim should ensure they perform all religious and useful worldly actions for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward from Him in both worlds. A sign of this correct mentality is that this person neither expects nor desires people to appreciate or show gratitude to them for the deeds they perform. If one desires this then it indicates their incorrect intention.

In addition, acting with the correct intention prevents sadness and bitterness as the one who acts for the sake of people will eventually encounter ungrateful people who will make them annoyed and bitter as

they feel they wasted their effort and time. Unfortunately, this is seen in parents and relatives as they often fulfill their duties towards their children and relatives for their sake instead of for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. But the one who acts for the sake of Allah, the exalted, will fulfill all their duties towards others such as their children and never become bitter or enraged when they fail to show gratitude towards them. This attitude leads to peace of mind and general happiness as they know Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their righteous deed and will reward them for it. This is the way all muslims must act otherwise they may well be left empty handed on the Day of Judgment.

***“And We...know what his soul whispers to him, and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“...and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein.”***

The divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, is mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 4:

*“...He is with you wherever you are. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised to adopt the true awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, in many Hadiths. For example, in one divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He is with whoever remembers Him. This is the reason why it has been reported in Hilyat Al Awliya, volume 1, pages 84 and 85, about the Commander of the Faithful, Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, that he shied away from the glitter and pomp of the material world and only found solace in the lonely night. Meaning, he sought the companionship of Allah, the Exalted, rather than the companionship of people.

Adopting the awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, not only prevents sins and encourages good deeds but it also prevents loneliness and depression. A person is very rarely affected by mental health issues when they are constantly surrounded by a person who loves them and aids them. No one loves the creation more than Allah, the Exalted, and there is no doubt that He is the source of all aid. Therefore,

acting with excellence benefits one's faith, actions, emotional state and the wider society.

A muslim must avoid becoming like those who treat Allah, the Exalted, as the most insignificant of those who observe them. This is a serious spiritual illness which leads to all types of sins and evil behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

***“...and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein.”***

Even though this verse indicates the general closeness of Allah, the Exalted, to the creation one should strive to obtain His special closeness and companionship.

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He is with anyone who remembers Him.

With the rise of mental problems and disorders, such as depression, it is vital for muslims to understand the importance of this declaration. There is a small chance of a person experiencing a mental issue when they are constantly surrounded and aided by someone that truly loves them. If this is true for a person it is undoubtedly more befitting for Allah, the Exalted, who has promised to be with the one who remembers Him. Acting on this declaration alone would eliminate all mental issues, such as depression. It is the reason why being secluded from others or being amongst others did not affect the mental state of the righteous predecessors as they were always in the company of Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious that when one obtains the company of Allah, the Exalted, they will overcome all obstacles and difficulties successfully until they reach His proximity in the hereafter.

In addition, out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, has not restricted this declaration in anyway. For example, He did not declare He was only

with the righteous or with those who perform specific good deeds. He in fact encompassed every muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith or how many sins they have committed. So a muslim should never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. But it is important to note the condition mentioned in this Hadith namely, to remember Allah, the Exalted. This is not only remembering Him with one's tongue but more importantly it is to remember Him through one's actions. This is only achieved by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The one who behaves in such a manner will be blessed with the company and support of Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, the more one obeys Allah, the Exalted, the more they will receive His company. What one gives is what they shall receive.

***“...and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein.”***

Even though this verse indicates the general closeness of Allah, the Exalted, to the creation one should strive to obtain His special closeness and companionship.

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares that a muslim can only draw close to Him through fulfilling their obligatory duties. And they can achieve the love of Allah, the Exalted, through voluntary righteous deeds.

This description splits the servants of Allah, the Exalted, into two categories. The first group draws near to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer, and in respect to people, such as the obligatory charity. This can be summed up by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

The second category of those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, are superior to the first group as they not only fulfil their obligatory duties but strive in voluntary righteous deeds. This clearly shows that this is the only path to the proximity of Allah, the Exalted. Whoever takes a path other than this will not achieve this vital goal. This completely rejects the concept

of obtaining sainthood without striving in obedience to Allah, the Exalted. The person who claims this is simply a liar. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body becomes pure. This leads to righteous deeds. So if a person does not perform righteous deeds, such as their obligatory duties, then their body is impure which means their spiritual heart is impure as well. This person can never reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, the greatest voluntary righteous deeds one can perform are those based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anyone who chooses to perform voluntary righteous deeds not based on his traditions has been fooled by the Devil as no path will take one close to Allah, the Exalted, except the path and actions 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....”*

The pious muslims who belong in the second higher group are also those who avoid unnecessary things of this material world. This attitude aids them in focusing their efforts on performing voluntary righteous deeds. It is this group who have perfected their faith by loving, hating, giving and withholding all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds Allah, the Exalted, blesses their five senses so that they use them in obedience to Him. This righteous servant will very rarely commit sins. This increase in guidance has been indicated in Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

This muslim reaches the level of excellence which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when a muslim performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will guard their mind and body from sins. This is the one who when they speak they speak for Allah, the Exalted, when they are silent they are silent for Allah, the Exalted. When they act they act for Him and when they are still they are for His sake. This is an aspect of monotheism and understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this muslim’s supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person

unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.

Chapter 50 – Qaf, Verses 17-18

إِذْ يَنْلَقَى الْمُلْتَقَيْنِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ ﴿١٧﴾

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ ﴿١٨﴾

*“When the two receivers [recording angels] receive, seated on the right and on the left.*

*He utters no word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record].”*

***“When the two receivers [recording angels] receive, seated on the right and on the left. He utters no word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record].”***

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.

***“When the two receivers [recording angels] receive, seated on the right and on the left. He utters no word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record].”***

These verses are connected to chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

*“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”*

In this verse Allah, the exalted, explains how people should conduct themselves when conversing with others so that they derive benefit for themselves and others. The first is that when muslims gather they should discuss how to benefit others which encompasses charity in the form of wealth and physical aid. If a muslim is not in a position to help a needy person then this is an excellent way of gaining reward equal to actually helping them. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6800, advises that the one who inspires someone else towards good will be rewarded as if they performed the good action themselves. If one cannot aid someone in difficulty or inspire another to fulfill this task they can at least encourage others to supplicate for the one in need. Supplication for an absent person causes the Angels to pray for the supplicator. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534. This mentality can inspire the group to visit the needy person which provides them with emotional support. This has a powerful psychological impact and provides them with a new mode of strength when dealing with their hardship. The

important thing to note is that when one mentions the situation of a needy person their intention must be to aid them in their hour of need. It should never be for the sake of passing time and making them a target of ridicule.

The second way to gain blessings is when one converses about anything lawful that will provide benefit to someone in this world or the next. This aspect includes advising others to do good and refrain from evil in every aspect of their life.

The third aspect mentioned in this verse involves conversing with others with a constructive mindset which brings people together in a positive way instead of possessing a destructive mindset which causes divisions within society. If a person cannot bring people together in a loving way then the minimum they can do is not cause divisions amongst them. Even this is recorded as a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2518.

In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, advises that reconciling between two opposing muslims for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is superior to voluntary prayer and fasting. Every good thing found within society was the outcome of this pious attitude such as the construction of schools, hospitals and Mosques.

But it is important to note, that a muslim will only obtain the great reward mentioned in this verse when they perform the righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Each person will be rewarded based on their intention not just their physical action. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The insincere muslim will find that on Judgment Day they will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

***“When the two receivers [recording angels] receive, seated on the right and on the left. He utters no word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record].”***

It is vital for muslims to be constantly aware of what they say as it only takes a single word to cause them to plummet into Hell on Judgement Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3970. It is important that a person thinks before speaking and only proceeds when the words will not be sinful or vain. This is the sign of an intelligent person. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176, a way for a muslim to escape all the dangers of the tongue namely, to either speak good or remain silent. Gaining knowledge on the dangers of the tongue will enforce this teaching. But if a muslim remains ignorant they will commit many sins through their words without even realising it. This is why gaining knowledge has been made a duty on all muslims which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“When the two receivers [recording angels] receive, seated on the right and on the left. He utters no word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record].”***

If one desires their recorded actions and speech to benefit them in both worlds then they must use their blessings, such as their speech, 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.

***“When the two receivers [recording angels] receive, seated on the right and on the left. He utters no word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record].”***

If one desires their recorded actions and speech to benefit them in both worlds then they must use their blessings, such as their speech, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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.

***“When the two receivers [recording angels] receive, seated on the right and on the left. He utters no word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record].”***

If one desires their recorded actions and speech to benefit them in both worlds then they must use their blessings, such as their speech, 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.

## Chapter 50 – Qaf, Verse 19

وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ ﴿١٩﴾

*“And the intoxication of death will bring the truth [of the hereafter]; that is what you were trying to avoid.”*

***“And the intoxication of death will bring the truth [of the hereafter];  
that is what you were trying to avoid.”***

People avoid death by ignoring it thereby failing to prepare for it and what comes after it.

Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The only way to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

***“And the intoxication of death will bring the truth [of the hereafter];  
that is what you were trying to avoid.”***

People avoid death by ignoring it thereby failing to prepare for it and what comes after it.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the

Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

*“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.” But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”*

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

***“And the intoxication of death will bring the truth [of the hereafter];  
that is what you were trying to avoid.”***

People avoid death by ignoring it thereby failing to prepare for it and what comes after it.

It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of the material world. Unfortunately, muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared.

It is important for muslims to understand that no matter how long they live life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A muslim only fails preparing for the hereafter correctly because of their pursuit of the excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities.

A muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“And the intoxication of death will bring the truth [of the hereafter];  
that is what you were trying to avoid.”***

People avoid death by ignoring it thereby failing to prepare for it and what comes after it.

When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing. Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim they stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that they stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, muslims do not treat it like one. Instead,

they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.

***“And the intoxication of death will bring the truth [of the hereafter];  
that is what you were trying to avoid.”***

People avoid death by ignoring it thereby failing to prepare for it and what comes after it.

Some muslims often claim that one's faith and the material world need to walk hand in hand with each other without a person being extreme in either. It is strange how most of those who claim this and use this statement as a way to enjoy the lawful luxuries and pleasures of this world do not truly understand nor adhere to it. This statement is true but applies to those worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. For example, occasionally exercising in order to keep the body healthy which is a trust given to a person. It does not mean one can enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world in excess while neglecting following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge even if they fulfil the standard obligatory duties. As gaining knowledge in itself is a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

In addition, walking hand in hand would suggest that one dedicates equal attention, effort and time to each thing. How many muslims can honestly say that they dedicate equal effort, energy and time to the material world and preparing for the hereafter? If they do not, and most do not, then how exactly are they fulfilling this statement?

A muslim should not fool themselves as their time on Earth is limited and they will not be given a second chance once they depart from it. Therefore, they should honestly strive to fulfil this statement by at least dedicating equal time, effort and energy to both the material world and preparing for the hereafter. It is important to note, that some would argue that treating a temporary abode and an everlasting abode equal is not wise.

***“And the intoxication of death will bring the truth [of the hereafter];  
that is what you were trying to avoid.”***

People avoid death by ignoring it thereby failing to prepare for it and what comes after it.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that there are two blessings people often do not appreciate until they lose them namely, good health and free time.

Everything in this material can be bought, even through illegal means, except time. Once it passes it does not return. Even though this reality is not denied by anyone irrespective of their faith yet, many muslims do not appreciate and make good use of the time they have been given. Many have adopted the mentality that they will prepare for the hereafter tomorrow. But as each day passes this tomorrow keeps getting delayed until, in many cases, this tomorrow never comes. And they only realise this tomorrow when it is too late meaning, at the time of their death. Those who are fortunate enough to reach this tomorrow during their lives may inhabit the Mosques when they reach elderly age but as they have dedicated so much time and energy to the material world their bodies might be in Mosques yet, their hearts and tongues are still engrossed in the material world. This is obvious to those who regularly attend Mosques. These muslims are unlikely to learn and act on Islamic teachings because of their elderly age and their worldly mentalities.

In addition, with the passing of time, in most cases, one's responsibilities only increase such as marriage and raising children. So delaying preparing for the hereafter until one is supposedly more free is simply foolish. Islam does not teach muslims to abandon the world but it does encourage them to make correct use of their time by taking enough from the material world in order to fulfil their necessitates and responsibilities without extravagance or waste and then dedicate the rest of their efforts to preparing for the permanent hereafter. This is how one uses their time correctly. How many muslims can honestly say they dedicate the majority of their efforts to preparing for the hereafter over beautifying their temporal world?

***“And the intoxication of death will bring the truth [of the hereafter];  
that is what you were trying to avoid.”***

People avoid death by ignoring it thereby failing to prepare for it and what comes after it. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“And the intoxication of death will bring the truth [of the hereafter];  
that is what you were trying to avoid.”***

People avoid death by ignoring it thereby failing to prepare for it and what comes after it. This involves using the blessings one has 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 the intoxication of death will bring the truth [of the hereafter];  
that is what you were trying to avoid.”***

It is quite obvious when observing most people that they strive hard in order to beautify their material world. In fact, many go beyond this by striving to mould their life so that it becomes perfect and permanent. For example, people spend large amounts of money on trying to build the perfect home while hoping that it will endure. Companies make billions out of this desire of people to be perfect and timeless, such as cosmetic companies. Some people endure painful operations in an attempt to defy time and achieve perfection. This shows that there is something within a person's soul which desires perfection and permanence. But the strange thing is that no matter how much money one spends and no matter how much effort they dedicate these two things namely, perfection and permanence, are not obtainable in this world. This internal desire was placed inside people to make them strive for perfection and permanence in a place where they do exist namely, the hereafter.

Unfortunately, some misunderstood this desire and misplaced it. Muslims should therefore not make this mistake but instead place this desire in the correct place by striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Only then will they be able to fulfil this desire and achieve true perfection and permanence.

## Chapter 50 – Qaf, Verses 20-23

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمَ الْوَعِيدِ ﴿٢٠﴾

وَجَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّعَهَا سَائِقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ ﴿٢١﴾

لَقَدْ كُنْتَ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَٰذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ  
حَدِيدٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

وَقَالَ قَرِينُهُ هَٰذَا مَا لَدَىٰ عَتِيدٍ ﴿٢٣﴾

*“And the Horn will be blown. That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat.*

*And every soul will come, with it a driver and a witness.*

*[It will be said], “You were certainly unmindful of this, and We have removed from you your cover, so your sight, this Day, is sharp.”*

*And his companion, [the angel], will say, “This [record] is what is with me, prepared.”*

***“And the Horn will be blown. That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat.”***

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.

***“And the Horn will be blown. That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat.”***

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.

***“...That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat.”***

The Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation on the Day of Judgment. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864.

This will cause people to sweat according to the deeds they performed during their lives on Earth. Some people's sweat will reach up to their ankles, some their knees and for others it will reach their mouths.

One only needs to ponder over the times they were subjected to intense summer weather and how the heat affected their attitude and behaviour. Through this one can imagine how difficult the situation on Judgment Day will be when the Sun is brought so close to them. This shows that those who strive hard and exert sincere efforts in the obedience 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, will find relaxation on Judgment Day. But those who were lazy and relaxed during their lives on Earth will be subjected to great stress on Judgment Day. Simply put, the one who strives here will relax there but the one who relaxes here will strive there in difficulty.

The same way people strive hard in this material world so that they obtain a comfortable life and even a comfortable retirement, even though reaching this retirement age is not guaranteed, muslims should strive even harder in this world by obeying Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of

their life so that they can obtain peace and comfort on a day that is guaranteed to occur. It is a sign of great ignorance to strive for a day one may never reach namely, the day of retirement, and not strive for a day they are guaranteed to reach and experience namely, Judgment Day.

***“...That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat.”***

People will be commanded to cross the Bridge which will be placed over Hell on the Day of Judgment. This has been discussed extensively in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6573. It warns that extremely large hooks will be on the Bridge which will affect people according to their deeds. Some will be flung into Hell by them, some will be subjected to great torture before they cross the Bridge, others will only face minimal injury from them and finally the righteous will not be harmed by them. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 455, warns that the Bridge is narrower than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword.

The important thing to learn from this is that each person will cross the Bridge according to their deeds. So it is important for Muslims not to neglect any duties if they desire to cross the Bridge safely. They must fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. These include duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. One should not neglect this and simply hope they will magically cross the Bridge unaffected.

In addition, the ease at which a person will cross this Bridge will be a mirror of how much they remained steadfast on the straight path of Islam in this world. This straight path is the path 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...”*

Anyone who abandons this path will not successfully cross this Bridge. Simply put, the more one remains steadfast on the straight path in this world the easier they will cross the Bridge over Hell on Judgment Day. The straight path has been made clear in this world so muslims are left with no excuses from following it thereby ensuring they safely cross the Bridge on Judgment Day.

***“That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat. And every soul will come, with it a driver and a witness. [It will be said], “You were certainly in unmindfulness of this...”...And his companion, [the angel], will say, “This [record] is what is with me, prepared.””***

The driver indicates the importance of understanding that answering for one’s actions is inescapable therefore muslims must prepare for it. The witness indicates the importance of understanding no deed, good or bad, small or big, will be overlooked and forgotten therefore muslims must ensure that they avoid all sins, major or minor, and instead perform all good deeds, small or big, regularly.

If one desires to have their record and the Angels testify on their behalf then they must practically prepare for the Day of Judgement. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

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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.

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If one desires to have their record and the Angels testify on their behalf then they must practically prepare for the Day of Judgement. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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.”*

***“That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat. And every soul will come, with it a driver and a witness. [It will be said], “You were certainly in unmindfulness of this...”...And his companion, [the angel], will say, “This [record] is what is with me, prepared.””***

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If one desires to have their record and the Angels testify on their behalf then they must practically prepare for the Day of Judgement. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat...[It will be said], “You were certainly in unmindfulness of this...””***

Having hopes for a long life encourages one to become unmindful of the Day of Judgement. It is important to note, that one’s judgement begins when they die as they can no longer perform good deeds, such as sincere repentance.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no

one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach Muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

*“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.”*

*But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”*

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

***“That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat...[It will be said], “You were certainly in unmindfulness of this...””***

Having hopes for a long life encourages one to become unmindful of the Day of Judgement. It is important to note, that one’s judgement begins when they die as they can no longer perform good deeds, such as sincere repentance.

Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The only way to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

***“That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat...[It will be said], “You were certainly in unmindfulness of this...””***

Having hopes for a long life encourages one to become unmindful of the Day of Judgement. It is important to note, that one’s judgement begins when they die as they can no longer perform good deeds, such as sincere repentance.

It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of the material world. Unfortunately, muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared.

It is important for muslims to understand that no matter how long they live life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A muslim only fails preparing for the hereafter correctly because of their pursuit of the excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities.

A muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat...[It will be said], “You were certainly in unmindfulness of this...””***

Having hopes for a long life encourages one to become unmindful of the Day of Judgement. It is important to note, that one’s judgement begins when they die as they can no longer perform good deeds, such as sincere repentance.

When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing. Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim they stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that they stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, muslims do not treat it

like one. Instead, they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.

***“That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat...[It will be said], “You were certainly in unmindfulness of this, and We have removed from you your cover, so your sight, this Day, is sharp.””***

When the cover of heedlessness is removed on the Day of Judgement they will obtain certainty of faith but this will not benefit them as the time for actions is over. Therefore, these verses indicate that the one who obtains certainty of faith during their life on Earth will not be unmindful of the Day of Judgement and they will instead practically prepare for it, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This in turn will ensure they achieve peace and success in both worlds.

Ignorance prevents certainty of faith.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu’ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat...[It will be said], “You were certainly in unmindfulness of this, and We have removed from you your cover, so your sight, this Day, is sharp.””***

When the cover of heedlessness is removed on the Day of Judgement they will obtain certainty of faith but this will not benefit them as the time for actions is over. Therefore, these verses indicate that the one who obtains certainty of faith during their life on Earth will not be unmindful of the Day of Judgement and they will instead practically prepare for it, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This in turn will ensure they achieve peace and success in both worlds.

A cause of weakness of faith and becoming unmindful of the Day of Judgement is failing to use one’s senses correctly.

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier yet the strength of muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge namely, they believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for

the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

***“That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat...[It will be said], “You were certainly in unmindfulness of this, and We have removed from you your cover, so your sight, this Day, is sharp.””***

When the cover of heedlessness is removed on the Day of Judgement they will obtain certainty of faith but this will not benefit them as the time for actions is over. Therefore, these verses indicate that the one who obtains certainty of faith during their life on Earth will not be unmindful of the Day of Judgement and they will instead practically prepare for it, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This in turn will ensure they achieve peace and success in both worlds.

A cause of weakness of faith and becoming unmindful of the Day of Judgement is failing to use one’s senses correctly.

Listening correctly to the word of Allah, the Exalted, is the only way one can correctly adhere to its teachings. It is important to understand the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is simply acknowledging a sound with one’s mind even if they fail to make sense of the noise. For example, a person may hear someone shouting at them from a great distance but they will not be able to understand what they are saying. Whereas, listening involves hearing a sound and understanding it so that one’s behaviour changes. For example, a person giving a specific verbal instruction to another who responds appropriately after hearing and understanding the instructions.

Muslims need to hear the word of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to understand it so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way. Unfortunately, many Muslims have failed to live up to this in respect to the Holy Quran as they are good at hearing the recitation of the Holy Quran but fail to correctly listen to it which involves understanding and acting on its teachings.

To conclude, simply hearing the word of Allah, the Exalted, is not good enough to obtain success one must strive to instead truly listen to it.

***“That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat...[It will be said], “You were certainly in unmindfulness of this, and We have removed from you your cover, so your sight, this Day, is sharp.””***

When the cover of heedlessness is removed on the Day of Judgement they will obtain certainty of faith but this will not benefit them as the time for actions is over. Therefore, these verses indicate that the one who obtains certainty of faith during their life on Earth will not be unmindful of the Day of Judgement and they will instead practically prepare for it, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This in turn will ensure they achieve peace and success in both worlds.

A cause of weakness of faith and becoming unmindful of the Day of Judgement is failing to use one’s senses correctly.

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by

taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat...[It will be said], “You were certainly in unmindfulness of this, and We have removed from you your cover, so your sight, this Day, is sharp.””***

When the cover of heedlessness is removed on the Day of Judgement they will obtain certainty of faith but this will not benefit them as the time for actions is over. Therefore, these verses indicate that the one who obtains certainty of faith during their life on Earth will not be unmindful of the Day of Judgement and they will instead practically prepare for it, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This in turn will ensure they achieve peace and success in both worlds.

A cause of weakness of faith and becoming unmindful of the Day of Judgement is failing to use one’s senses correctly.

It is important for a muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

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

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden message a muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

***“That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat...[It will be said], “You were certainly in unmindfulness of this, and We have removed from you your cover, so your sight, this Day, is sharp.””***

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A cause of weakness of faith and becoming unmindful of the Day of Judgement is failing to use one’s senses correctly.

It is important for muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only

a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat...[It will be said], “You were certainly in unmindfulness of this, and We have removed from you your cover, so your sight, this Day, is sharp.””***

When the cover of heedlessness is removed on the Day of Judgement they will obtain certainty of faith but this will not benefit them as the time for actions is over. Therefore, these verses indicate that the one who obtains certainty of faith during their life on Earth will not be unmindful of the Day of Judgement and they will instead practically prepare for it, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This in turn will ensure they achieve peace and success in both worlds.

A cause of weakness of faith and becoming unmindful of the Day of Judgement is failing to use one’s senses correctly.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one’s spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat...[It will be said], “You were certainly in unmindfulness of this, and We have removed from you your cover, so your sight, this Day, is sharp.””***

When the cover of heedlessness is removed on the Day of Judgement they will obtain certainty of faith but this will not benefit them as the time for actions is over. Therefore, these verses indicate that the one who obtains certainty of faith during their life on Earth will not be unmindful of the Day of Judgement and they will instead practically prepare for it, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This in turn will ensure they achieve peace and success in both worlds.

It is important for muslims to understand that whenever they face any type of worldly failure or regrets they should remind themselves of the regrets in the hereafter some people will have, such as the one mentioned in chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

*“He will say, “Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.””*

In this world one's regret will always be followed by another chance or other options which they can pursue in order to gain success once again. But the regret and failure of the hereafter is something which cannot be rectified meaning, there are no second chances in the next world. No one will have the opportunity to return to Earth in order to act differently.

Therefore, every muslim should be more concerned with the failures they may encounter in the hereafter over the failures and regrets of this world. This does not mean one should not strive to achieve lawful success in this world. It means they should always prioritise gaining success in the hereafter over gaining success in this world. This is an important mentality muslims should adopt before they reach a day where reflecting on their failures and regrets will not help them in the slightest. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“That is the Day of [carrying out] the threat...[It will be said], “You were certainly in unmindfulness of this, and We have removed from you your cover, so your sight, this Day, is sharp.””***

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All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one’s certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the

Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

Chapter 50 – Qaf, Verses 24-29

أَلْقِيَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ عِنْدِ ﴿٢٤﴾

مَنَّاغٍ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ مُّرِيبٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

الَّذِي جَعَلَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَأَلْقِيَاهُ فِي الْعَذَابِ الشَّدِيدِ ﴿٢٦﴾

﴿٢٧﴾ قَالَ قَرِينُهُ رَبَّنَا مَا أَطَعَيْتُهُ وَلَكِنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٢٧﴾

قَالَ لَا تَخْصِمُوا لَدَيَّ وَقَدْ قَدَّمْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ بِالْوَعِيدِ ﴿٢٨﴾

﴿٢٩﴾ مَا يُبَدِّلُ الْقَوْلُ لَدَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا بِظَلَمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ ﴿٢٩﴾

*"[Allah will say], "Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever.*

*Preventer of good, aggressor, and doubter.*

*Who made [as equal] with Allah another deity; then throw him into the severe punishment."*

*His companion will say, "Our Lord, I did not make him transgress, but he [himself] was in extreme error."*

*[Allah] will say, "Do not dispute before Me, while I had already presented to you the threat [i.e., warning]."*

*The word [i.e., decree] will not be changed with Me, and never will I be unjust to the servants.""*

***“[Allah will say], “Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever.””***

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a muslim is in danger of dying as a non-muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

*“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”*

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

***“[Allah will say], "Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever.””***

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for.

One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

***“[Allah will say], "Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever."...His companion will say, "Our Lord, I did not make him transgress, but he [himself] was in extreme error.””***

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is

good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“[Allāh will say], "Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever.  
Preventer of good...””***

A sign of hypocrisy is that a person spreads corruption in society. This negative characteristic affects all social levels beginning from a family unit and ending at the international level. This type of person dislikes seeing people uniting on good as this may cause the worldly status of others to increase beyond their own. This drives them to backbiting and slander in order to cause people to turn against each other. Their evil attitude destroys their own ties of kinship and when they observe other families who are happy it drives them to destroy their happiness also. They are fault finders who dedicate their time unveiling the mistakes of others in order to drag their social status down. They are the first people to begin gossiping about others and act deaf whenever good things are spoken about. Peace and quiet disturbs them so they seek to create problems in order to entertain themselves. They fail to remember the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546. It advises that whoever covers the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will cover their faults. But whoever seeks out and unveils the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will expose their faults to the people. So in reality, this type of person is only unveiling their own faults to society even though they believe they are exposing the faults of others.

***“[Allāh will say], "Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever.  
Preventer of good...””***

A part of hypocrisy is that a person not only commits evil deeds themselves and abstains from righteous deeds but they encourage others to do the same. They want others to be in the same boat as them so that they find some comfort in their evil character. They not only drown themselves but take others down with them. Muslims must know that a person will be held accountable for every other person who commits a sin because of their invitation. This person will be treated as if they committed the sin even though they only invited others towards it. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 203. This is why some have said that blessed is the person whose evil dies with them because their sins will increase if others act on their evil advice even though they are no longer alive.

***“[Allāh will say], "Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever.  
Preventer of good...””***

These verses warn against bad 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.”*

***“[Allāh will say], "Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever. Preventer of good...””***

Muslims often claim that as they are very busy in their worldly activities they find it difficult to do voluntary righteous deeds especially, those related to people, such as physically supporting someone. Even though muslims should strive to perform as much voluntary righteous deeds as possible as it will benefit them in both worlds whereas, their worldly activities will only benefit them in this world none the less, the least these muslims should do is adopt a neutral mentality towards others. This means that if a muslim cannot help others they should not hinder them in their lawful and good activities. If they cannot make others happy they should not make them sad. If they cannot make others laugh they should not make them cry. This can be applied to countless scenarios. This is important to understand as many muslims might do good to others, such as provide them emotional support, but at the same time they destroy their good deeds by being negative towards people. It is important to note, if a muslim is excessive in being negative towards others it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Having a neutral mentality is actually a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250.

To conclude, it is best to treat others in a positive way which is a sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. But if they cannot do this the least they should do is treat others in a neutral way. As treating others in a negative way may well lead to one's destruction.

***“[Allāh will say], "Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever.  
Preventer of good...””***

Whoever conceals knowledge without a valid reason will be bridled with fire on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2649. Therefore, muslims must share the useful knowledge their gain with others. It is simply foolish not to as this is one of the righteous deeds which will benefit a muslim even after they die. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 241. Those who hoarded knowledge were forgotten by history but those who shared it with others became known as the scholars and teachers of mankind.

***“[Allāh will say], "Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever...aggressor...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the bankrupt muslim is the one who accumulates many righteous deeds, such as fasting and prayer, but as they mistreated people their good deeds will be given to their victims and if necessary their victim's sins will be given to them on Judgement Day. This will lead to them being hurled into Hell.

It is important to understand that a muslim must fulfil two aspects of faith in order to achieve success. The first are the duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer. The second aspect is in respect to people which includes treating them kindly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true believer until they keep they physical and verbal harm away from the life and possessions of others.

It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, is infinitely forgiving meaning, He will forgive those who sincerely repent to Him. But He will not forgive the sins which involve other people until the victim forgives first. As people are not so forgiving a muslim should be fearful that those who they have wronged will exact revenge on them by taking away their precious good deeds on Judgment Day. Even if a muslim fulfils the rights of Allah, the Exalted, they may still end up in Hell simply because they have wronged others. It is therefore important for muslims to strive

to fulfil both aspects of their duties in order to obtain success in both worlds.

***“[Allāh will say], "Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever...doubter.””***

The root of having doubts in the promises of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“[Allāh will say], “Throw into Hell...Who made [as equal] with Allāh another deity; then throw him into the severe punishment.””***

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.

***“[Allāh will say], "Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever. Preventer of good, aggressor, and doubter. Who made [as equal] with Allāh another deity; then throw him into the severe punishment.””***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

***“[Allah will say], "Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever."...His companion will say, "Our Lord, I did not make him transgress, but he [himself] was in extreme error."”***

These verses warn against bad companionship.

Muslims should note that a major sign of true love is when one directs their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is because obedience leads to success and safety in both this world and in the hereafter. A person who does not desire safety and success for a person can never truly love them irrespective of what they claim or how they treat the other person. The same way a person becomes happy when their beloved obtains worldly success, like a job, they will also desire their beloved to obtain success in the hereafter. If a person does not care about another obtaining safety and success especially, in the next world then they do not love them.

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

Therefore, a muslim should assess whether those in their life direct them towards Allah, the Exalted, or not. If they do then it is a clear sign of their love for them. If they do not then it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

***“[Allah will say], "Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever."...His companion will say, "Our Lord, I did not make him transgress, but he [himself] was in extreme error." [Allāh] will say, "Do not dispute before Me, while I had already presented to you the threat [i.e., warning].””***

These verses are connected to chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 22:

*“And Satan will say when the matter has been concluded, "Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you. But I had no authority over you except that I invited you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me; but blame yourselves...””*

This is when people on Judgment Day will try to blame the Devil for their sins in order to shift their burden of punishment to him. But this verse makes it clear that this is a futile and foolish excuse as the Devil only inspires people to commit sins meaning, he cannot physically force someone to disobey Allah, the Exalted. Each person makes a choice to obey or disobey Allah, the Exalted, and will therefore face the consequences of their choice. Unfortunately, some do not understand this important point. They often commit sins and either blame others by declaring they were convinced to act in this way or they declare as others are committing sins openly it somehow gives them a license to act in the same way. The same way a worldly judge in a court of law will never accept these excuses neither will Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. It is important for muslims not to make culture or fashion the standards for their behaviour as this will misguide them and they will be left with no valid

excuses on Judgment Day. Instead, they should adhere to the teachings of Islam which simply outlines how a person must behave in all situations. It is time muslims abandon childish excuses and sincerely obey 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, before they reach a day when their excuses will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. If Allah, the Exalted, will reject the excuses of those who blame the Devil when he is their open enemy and promised to misguide them how will Allah, the Exalted, accept any other excuse for disobeying Him?

***“[Allah will say], "Throw into Hell every obstinate disbeliever."...His companion will say, "Our Lord, I did not make him transgress, but he [himself] was in extreme error." [Allāh] will say, "Do not dispute before Me, while I had already presented to you the threat [i.e., warning].””***

It is important for muslims to understand that whenever they face any type of worldly failure or regrets they should remind themselves of the regrets in the hereafter some people will have, such as the one mentioned in chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

*“He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.””*

In this world one's regret will always be followed by another chance or other options which they can pursue in order to gain success once again. But the regret and failure of the hereafter is something which cannot be rectified meaning, there are no second chances in the next world. No one will have the opportunity to return to Earth in order to act differently.

Therefore, every muslim should be more concerned with the failures they may encounter in the hereafter over the failures and regrets of this world. This does not mean one should not strive to achieve lawful success in this world. It means they should always prioritise gaining success in the hereafter over gaining success in this world. This is an important mentality

muslims should adopt before they reach a day where reflecting on their failures and regrets will not help them in the slightest. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“[Allāh] will say, “...The word [i.e., decree] will not be changed with Me, and never will I be unjust to the servants.””***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and

religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“[Allāh] will say, "...The word [i.e., decree] will not be changed with Me, and never will I be unjust to the servants.””***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“[Allāh] will say, "...The word [i.e., decree] will not be changed with Me, and never will I be unjust to the servants.””***

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who judges the actions of His creation and justly chooses the outcome of all things. The muslim who understands that Allah, the Exalted, only acts with justice will always be pleased with His choices and will therefore show patience in difficulty and gratitude in pleasing situations. The one who is content with the rulings of the Just will find peace in this world and in the next.

A muslim must act on this divine name by always acting with justice with themselves and in matters concerning others. This includes fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, oneself and others according to the teachings of Islam even if it contradicts one's desires or the desires of others. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”*

The one who achieves this will become a complete balanced believer. This is the character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 50 – Qaf, Verses 30-35

يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ امْتَلَأَتْ وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَّزِيدٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

وَأَزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٣١﴾

هَذَا مَا تُوْعَدُونَ لِكُلِّ أَوَّابٍ حَفِيظٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

مَنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَجَاءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُنِيبٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

أَدْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُلُودِ ﴿٣٤﴾

لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ ﴿٣٥﴾

*"On the Day We will say to Hell, "Have you been filled?" and it will say, "Are there some more."*

*And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far.*

*[It will be said], "This is what you were promised - for every returner [to Allah] and keeper [of His covenant].*

*Who feared the Most Merciful in the unseen and came with a heart returning.*

*Enter it in peace. This is the Day of Eternity."*

*They will have whatever they wish therein, and with Us is more."*

***“On the Day We will say to Hell, "Have you been filled?" and it will say, "Are there some more."”***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of

righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far.”***

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and

slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far.”***

The last part of this verse could also mean that the time for Judgement Day and entering Paradise for the righteous is not far off.

In reality, one’s final judgement begins when they die as they are no longer in a position to do more deeds, such as sincere repentance.

Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The only way to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His

prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

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In reality, one's final judgement begins when they die as they are no longer in a position to do more deeds, such as sincere repentance.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the

things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

*“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.” But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”*

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far.”***

The last part of this verse could also mean that the time for Judgement Day and entering Paradise for the righteous is not far off.

In reality, one’s final judgement begins when they die as they are no longer in a position to do more deeds, such as sincere repentance.

It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of the material world. Unfortunately, muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared.

It is important for muslims to understand that no matter how long they live life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A muslim only

fails preparing for the hereafter correctly because of their pursuit of the excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities.

A muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far.”***

The last part of this verse could also mean that the time for Judgement Day and entering Paradise for the righteous is not far off.

In reality, one's final judgement begins when they die as they are no longer in a position to do more deeds, such as sincere repentance.

When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing. Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim they stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that they stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not

adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, muslims do not treat it like one. Instead, they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far.”***

The last part of this verse could also mean that the time for Judgement Day and entering Paradise for the righteous is not far off.

In reality, one’s final judgement begins when they die as they are no longer in a position to do more deeds, such as sincere repentance. Therefore, one must utilise every moment they have been given to practically prepare for the Day of Judgement. This involves 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.

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The last part of this verse could also mean that the time for Judgement Day and entering Paradise for the righteous is not far off.

In reality, one’s final judgement begins when they die as they are no longer in a position to do more deeds, such as sincere repentance. Therefore, one must utilise every moment they have been given to practically prepare for the Day of Judgement. This involves 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 Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far. [It will be said], “This is what you were promised...””***

Ignorance prevents one from being positively influenced by the promises of Allah, the Exalted.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far. [It will be said], “This is what you were promised...””***

Ignorance prevents one from being positively influenced by the promises of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far. [It will be said], "This is what you were promised - for every returner [to Allāh]...””***

Constantly connecting one's intentions, words and actions to Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of being sincere to 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 Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

*"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."*

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

*"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."*

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far. [It will be said], "This is what you were promised - for every...keeper [of His covenant].””***

These verses are connected to chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

*“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware.””*

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere 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.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a muslim has a choice between pleasing Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments, enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person's heart indicates that it is a duty on muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a muslim. Certainty of faith allows a muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far. [It will be said], “This is what you were promised - for every...keeper [of His limits].””***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516, that if a muslim safeguards Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will protect them.

This means that if one safeguards the limits and commands of Allah, the Exalted, they will be protected by Him. One can simply achieve this by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 112:

*“...and those who observe the limits [set by] Allah. And give good tidings to the believers.”*

There are many aspects of safeguarding one’s duty to Allah, the Exalted. One of the greatest duties to safeguard is the pacts and promises made with Allah, the Exalted, and people. The greatest pact the entire mankind took with Allah, the Exalted, was accepting Him as their Lord. Chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 172:

*“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], “Am I not your Lord?” They said, “Yes, we have testified.”...”*

This means one must obey Allah, the Exalted, and those which lead to His obedience. But if one obeys someone which results in the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they have broken their promise and taken another as their Lord. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

*“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”*

Another example is safeguarding the obligatory prayer. This has been mentioned repeatedly throughout the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This duty is so significant that a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 425, advises that whoever fulfils this duty correctly has been promised forgiveness. But the one who fails to safeguard their obligatory prayers has no guarantee of forgiveness.

Safeguarding the obligatory prayers has been indicated in another Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 277. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that only a true believer safeguards their ablution, which is the key to the prayer.

An aspect of safeguarding the limits of Allah, the Exalted, is discussed in another Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2458. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised muslims to safeguard their head and stomachs. This includes using one's eyes, ears, tongue and thoughts in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Protecting the stomach involves refraining from obtaining and utilising unlawful wealth and food. Safeguarding the tongue and one's passionate desire has been commanded in many different places. For example, one Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6474, advises that whoever safeguards these two things is guaranteed paradise.

A fundamental Islamic principle teaches muslims that how they act is how they shall be treated by Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Quran advises muslims that whoever supports Islam will be supported by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

*“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”*

Another example is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152. The Holy Quran declares that whoever remembers Allah, the Exalted, will be remembered by Him.

*“So remember Me; I will remember you...”*

Allah, the Exalted, will even safeguard the family of the one who safeguards His limits. The Holy Quran explains how Allah, the Exalted, safeguarded the buried treasure of two orphans as their father was righteous. As their father safeguarded the limits of Allah, the Exalted, He in turn safeguarded his orphan children. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verse 82:

*“And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and there was beneath it a treasure for them, and their father had been righteous...”*

In fact, whoever safeguards the limits of Allah, the Exalted, will find that Allah, the Exalted, gives them a way out of every difficulty in both this world and the next. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

*“...whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”*

In some cases Allah, the Exalted, averts things from His righteous servant which outwardly seem to be good, such as getting a new job, yet there is a

hidden evil or difficulty which Allah, the Exalted, desires to protect His servant from. 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.”*

The greatest thing Allah, the Exalted, protects is a muslim's faith. Allah, the Exalted, saves His servant from doubts, evil innovations, sins and anything else which could corrupt their faith. This ensures they leave the world with their faith intact.

The overall teaching of the advice given in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is to safeguard all the limits of Islam by utilising the blessings one possesses in ways which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Whoever safeguards the limits of Allah, the Exalted, will be safeguarded by Allah, the Exalted. They will find that all difficulties and tests become bearable and they will be guided to travel through them safely while obtaining blessings in both worlds.

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far. [It will be said], “This is what you were promised - for every...Who feared the Most Merciful in the unseen...””***

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of Ihsan, which can be translated to mean excellence. This excellence refers to one’s conduct and behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Acting with excellence has been mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as chapter 10 Yunus, verse 26:

*“For them who have done excellent is the best [reward] - and extra...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has explained this verse in Hadiths found in Sahih Muslim, numbers 449 and 450. The word extra in this verse refers to when the inhabitants of Paradise will be blessed with the divine vision of Allah, the Exalted. This reward befits the muslim who acts with excellence. As excellence means to lead one’s life as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted, observing their outer and inner being at all times. A person who can observe a powerful authority watching them will never misbehave out of awe of them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised someone to always behave as if they were constantly being observed by a righteous man they respected. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Tabarani’s, Al Mu’jam Al Kabir, number 5539.

Whoever acts in this manner will very rarely commit sins and always hasten towards good deeds. This attitude creates the fear of Allah, the Exalted, and acts as a shield from the fire of trials in this world and the fire of Hell in the hereafter. This vigilance will ensure one not only fulfills all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, but it also encourages them to fulfill their responsibilities towards the creation. The peak of which is to sincerely treat others with kindness. This person will fulfill the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 251, which advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This level of excellence ensures one acts with the right intention, which is the foundation of faith according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Success is guaranteed for the one who performs good deeds and demonstrates good behavior with the right intention namely, to please Allah, the Exalted. The more excellent a person acts the stronger their faith becomes until they become a muslim who is far from heedlessness and is always struggling to beautify their hereafter and worldly life according to the teachings of Islam.

It is feared that the opposite of this reward will be given to those who turned away from Allah, the Exalted. As they lived without fearing the all-encompassing gaze of Allah, the Exalted, they will be veiled from seeing Him in the hereafter. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 15:

*“No! Indeed, from their Lord, that Day, they will be partitioned.”*

Those who fail to reach the level of acting as if they witness Allah, the Exalted, must act on the second part of the advice given in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning. This person should sincerely believe that Allah, the Exalted, is constantly observing them. Even though this state is lower in rank than the one who acts as if they observe Allah, the Exalted, none the less, it is a great way of adopting true fear of Allah, the Exalted. As mentioned earlier this attitude will prevent one from committing sins and encourage them towards good deeds. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in Imam Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, number 7935, the one who strives to adopt this mentality will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

The divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, is mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 4:

*"...He is with you wherever you are. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing."*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised to adopt the true awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, in many Hadiths. For example, in one divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He is with whoever remembers Him. This is the reason why it has been reported in Hilyat Al Awliya, volume 1, pages 84 and 85, about the Commander of the Faithful, Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, that he shied away from

the glitter and pomp of the material world and only found solace in the lonely night. Meaning, he sought the companionship of Allah, the Exalted, rather than the companionship of people.

Adopting the awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, not only prevents sins and encourages good deeds but it also prevents loneliness and depression. A person is very rarely affected by mental health issues when they are constantly surrounded by a person who loves them and aids them. No one loves the creation more than Allah, the Exalted, and there is no doubt that He is the source of all aid. Therefore, acting with excellence benefits one's faith, actions, emotional state and the wider society.

A muslim must avoid becoming like those who treat Allah, the Exalted, as the most insignificant of those who observe them. This is a serious spiritual illness which leads to all types of sins and evil behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far. [It will be said], “This is what you were promised - for every...Who feared the Most Merciful in the unseen...””***

This indicates the strength of their faith. The stronger one’s faith the more they adhere to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one’s certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for 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.”*

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

*“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”*

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far. [It will be said], “This is what you were promised - for every...Who feared the Most Merciful in the unseen...””***

Unseen could also mean that this muslim fears Allah, the Exalted, even when other people cannot see them.

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6806, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned seven groups of people who will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

This shade will protect them from the horrors of the Day of Judgment which includes the unbearable heat caused by the Sun being brought within two miles of the creation. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421.

One of these groups includes a person who remembers Allah, the Exalted, in solitude and cries. Firstly, the fact that this reaction occurs in solitude indicates the sincerity of the muslim meaning, their reaction is purely for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This reaction could be due to a number of factors which include one’s realisation of the uncountable blessings they have been granted even though they show a lack of gratitude for them by using them incorrectly. One's understanding of the mercy of Allah, the

Exalted, when He conceals their sins from the creation. A muslim continuously receiving blessings from Allah, the Exalted, even when they sin. A muslim's reflection and assessment of their own deeds which encourages them to sincerely repent. One's realisation that they will only be forgiven and granted Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and not because of their righteous deeds, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6467. The important thing to note is that this reaction only occurs when one truly reflects on this material world, the afterlife, death, Judgment Day and their deeds. The one who is heedless to this will never achieve this outcome.

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far. [It will be said], “This is what you were promised - for every...Who...came with a heart returning.””***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one’s spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one’s tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far. [It will be said], “This is what you were promised - for every...Who...came with a heart returning.””***

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 Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far. [It will be said], “This is what you were promised...Enter it in peace. This is the Day of Eternity.””***

Those who desire to receive this peace in the hereafter should spread peace in this world.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 12, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised a good quality found within Islam. Namely, to spread the Islamic greeting of peace to people one knows and to those they do not know.

It is important to act on this good characteristic as nowadays muslims often only spread the Islamic greeting of peace to those they know. It is important to spread it to all as this leads to love between people and strengthens Islam. In fact, this characteristic leads to Paradise according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 194.

A muslim should never forget that they will receive a minimum of ten rewards for every greeting of peace they extend to others even if others fail to reply to them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5195.

Finally, a muslim should fulfill the Islamic greeting of peace correctly by demonstrating this peace in their other speech and actions towards others by keeping their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others. This is in fact, the definition of a true muslim and believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far. [It will be said], “This is what you were promised...Enter it in peace. This is the Day of Eternity.” They will have whatever they wish therein, and with Us is more.”***

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom’s worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more

one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

***“And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far. [It will be said], "This is what you were promised - for every returner [to Allāh] and keeper [of His covenant]. Who feared the Most Merciful in the unseen and came with a heart returning [in repentance]. Enter it in peace. This is the Day of Eternity." They will have whatever they wish therein, and with Us is more.”***

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

## Chapter 50 – Qaf, Verses 36-37

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا فَنَقَّبُوا  
فِي الْبِلَادِ هَلْ مِنْ مَّخِيصٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرٍ لِمَن كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ  
وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٣٧﴾

*“And how many a generation before them [the people of Mecca] did We destroy who were greater than them in [striking] power and had explored throughout the lands. Is there any place of escape?*

*Indeed in that is a reminder for whoever has a heart or who listens while he is present [in mind].”*

***“And how many a generation before them [the people of Mecca] did We destroy who were greater than them in [striking] power and had explored throughout the lands. Is there any place of escape? Indeed in that is a reminder...”***

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

***“And how many a generation before them [the people of Mecca] did We destroy who were greater than them in [striking] power and had explored throughout the lands. Is there any place of escape? Indeed in that is a reminder...”***

Islam teaches muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”*

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work

and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

***“And how many a generation before them [the people of Mecca] did We destroy who were greater than them in [striking] power and had explored throughout the lands. Is there any place of escape? Indeed in that is a reminder...”***

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be

thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

***“And how many a generation before them [the people of Mecca] did We destroy who were greater than them in [striking] power and had explored throughout the lands. Is there any place of escape? Indeed in that is a reminder...”***

It is important for muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

***“And how many a generation before them [the people of Mecca] did We destroy who were greater than them in [striking] power and had explored throughout the lands. Is there any place of escape? Indeed in that is a reminder...”***

Ignorance prevents one from benefiting from the reminders of Allah, the Exalted.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of

ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“And how many a generation before them [the people of Mecca] did We destroy who were greater than them in [striking] power and had explored throughout the lands. Is there any place of escape? Indeed in that is a reminder...”***

Ignorance prevents one from benefiting from the reminders of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart

which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“Indeed in that is a reminder...”***

Generally speaking, it is important for a muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

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

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden message a muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the

Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

***“Indeed in that is a reminder for whoever has a heart...”***

This indicates that the signs of Allah, the Exalted, will affect the one whose spiritual heart is pure.

Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

*“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”*

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in

evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

***“Indeed in that is a reminder for whoever...listens while he is present [in mind].”***

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier yet the strength of muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge namely, they believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

***“Indeed in that is a reminder for whoever...listens while he is present [in mind].”***

Listening correctly to the word of Allah, the Exalted, is the only way one can correctly adhere to its teachings. It is important to understand the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is simply acknowledging a sound with one's mind even if they fail to make sense of the noise. For example, a person may hear someone shouting at them from a great distance but they will not be able to understand what they are saying. Whereas, listening involves hearing a sound and understanding it so that one's behaviour changes. For example, a person giving a specific verbal instruction to another who responds appropriately after hearing and understanding the instructions.

Muslims need to hear the word of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to understand it so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way. Unfortunately, many Muslims have failed to live up to this in respect to the Holy Quran as they are good at hearing the recitation of the Holy Quran but fail to correctly listen to it which involves understanding and acting on its teachings.

To conclude, simply hearing the word of Allah, the Exalted, is not good enough to obtain success one must strive to instead truly listen to it.

Chapter 50 – Qaf, Verse 38

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ  
أَيَّامٍ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُغُوبٍ ﴿٣٨﴾

*“And We did certainly create the heavens and earth and what is between them in six days, and there touched Us no weariness.”*

***“And We did certainly create the heavens and earth and what is between them in six days...”***

Allah, the Exalted, could have created the Heavens and the Earth in a single moment. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 117:

*“...When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, "Be," and it is.”*

One of the wisdoms behind creating the Heavens and the Earth over six days was to teach mankind the important lesson of progressively working towards a higher goal. Allah, the Exalted, does not expect people to become saints in a single moment but He expects them to learn and act on the teachings of the Islam progressively so that they improve their behaviour towards Him and the creation step by step.

Even though, a Muslim has no excuses but to fulfill their obligatory duties and learn and act on the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, none the less, each Muslim should act according to their mental and physical strength and treat others according to their mental and physical strength in order to ensure they themselves do not get fed up nor cause others to become fed up of Islam either.

It is important to understand each person has been created uniquely and given different blessings and gifts. For example, some have the strength to perform much voluntary fasts while others do not. Some have the mental strength to spend the day studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whereas others do not. Some can happily discuss religious issues all day with others while others just do not have the attention or mental strength to do so. This does not mean those who do not possess the strength to do these things are bad Muslims as Allah, the Exalted, will judge each person according to their potential, strength, intention and the deeds they performed. This discussion means that Muslims should not be too hard on themselves or others when it comes to striving on voluntary religious matters. A Muslim should strive to improve bit by bit to ensure they do not get fed up and give up completely. If a Muslim has been granted the strength to strive in voluntary religious matters they should praise Allah, the Exalted, as none but Him as granted this to them. Understanding this will prevent the deadly sin of pride an atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

***“And We did certainly create the heavens and earth and what is between them in six days, and there touched Us no weariness.”***

When Allah, the Exalted, created and constantly maintains the vast universe with ease then why is it strange to accept that He can resurrect a tiny human after they have turned into dust and bones, after He created them from nothing in the first place? Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 33:

*“Do they not see that Allāh, who created the heavens and earth and did not fail in their creation, is able to give life to the dead? Yes. Indeed, He is over all things competent.”*

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are

countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot

take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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 50 – Qaf, Verses 39-40

فَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ  
الْشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ ﴿٣٩﴾

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَأَدْبَرَ السُّجُودِ ﴿٤٠﴾

*“So be patient, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him],  
over what they say and exalt [Allah] with praise of your Lord before the  
rising of the sun and before its setting.*

*And [in part] of the night exalt Him and after prostration [prayer].”*

***“So be patient, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], over what they say...”***

Whenever one invites others towards Islam, commands good and forbids evil they will be challenging the heedless lifestyle of many others which will inspire them to resist the truth anyway they can. The major reason all the past nations rejected their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, was due to this very reason. They could not abandon their lifestyles and characteristics and in defense of them were prepared to wage war against Allah, the Exalted, and their Holy Prophet, peace be upon him. When one takes up this important duty they must be prepared to face many hardships caused by others including their own relatives. The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, are the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they encountered countless difficulties from their nations. One only needs to study the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to observe this fact. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472, that no one in creation had been persecuted in the path of Allah, the Exalted, more than him.

In cases like this one's response to the bad attitude of others should be educated, respectful and gentle. An example of this is found in chapter 19 Maryam, verses 46-47:

*“[His father] said, "Have you no desire for my gods, O Abraham? If you do not desist, I will surely stone you, so avoid me a prolonged time.”*

*[Abraham] said, "Peace [i.e., safety] will be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Indeed, He is ever gracious to me."*

Here the kind and respectful response of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, to the harsh attitude of his elder is discussed.

In most cases, a person must possess a character flaw if they claim to get along with everyone. Due to the differences within the members of society a person will never get along with everyone. They will always be one or more that disagree with their mentality, life style and advice. This diversity will lead to tension and occasionally problems. But if a person is liked by everyone then in most cases it shows they have adopted the mentality of the hypocrites by being two-faced. If the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were not loved by all how can a normal person achieve this status? This is the reason one should not believe in propaganda as the group that were mistreated the most in this way were the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023.

For example, the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, was once falsely accused of illegal relations by a shameless woman. She was enticed into slandering him by the enemy of Allah, the Exalted, Quraon. When she accused the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, publically during a religious gathering he interrogated her. When she observed his reaction she immediately retracted her accusation and admitted the truth. As a result Allah, the Exalted, destroyed Quraon by commanding the Earth to swallow him and his great treasury. This incident has been recorded in

Imam Dhahabi's, The Major Sins, Pages 166-167. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 81:

*“And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home...”*

The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were slandered on many occasions but they remained steadfast on their mission until they were granted victory by Allah, the Exalted. When Allah, the Exalted, decides to complete a task like aiding the one who spreads the true word of faith the entire creation combined cannot stop Him.

Muslims must accept that they too will face hardships when spreading the word of Islam. Therefore, they must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, by remaining steadfast in the face of difficulties. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. If one desires to join them in the next world they must adopt this attitude also.

***“So be patient, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], over what they say...”***

A muslim should always remember that there are two types of people. The first are rightly guided as their criticism of others is based on the criticism and advice found in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This type will always be constructive and guide one to blessings and the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These people will also refrain from over or under praising others. Over praising others can cause them to become proud and arrogant. Under praising others can lead them to becoming lazy and put them off from doing good. This reaction is often observed in children. Praising according to the teachings of Islam will inspire others to strive harder in both worldly and religious matters and it will prevent them from becoming arrogant. Therefore, the praise and constructive criticism of this person should be accepted and acted upon even if it comes from a stranger.

The second type of person criticises based on their own desires. This criticism is mostly unconstructive and only shows one's bad mood and attitude. These people often over and under praise others as they act based on their own desires. The negative effects of these two were mentioned earlier. Therefore, the criticism and praise of this person should be ignored in the majority of cases even if it comes from a loved one as it will only cause one to become unnecessarily sad in cases of criticism and arrogant in cases of praise.

It is important to remember that a person who over praises others will often over criticise them too. The rule one should always follow is that they should only accept the criticism and praise based on the teachings of Islam. All other things should be ignored and not taken personally.

***“So be patient, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], over what they say...”***

It is important to understand that generally when one chooses a path which is different from the path of others, such as their relatives and friends, they will face criticism and resistance from them. In fact, the majority of criticism comes from a person's relatives. For example, when a muslim decides to concentrate more on acting on the teachings of Islam and if it is something their family have not pursued themselves then they will face criticism from them. They will be labelled foolish and extreme by those who they believed would support them on their path. It is important for muslims to remain steadfast on the lawful path they choose and trust in the help of Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in order to overcome these difficulties.

This is a common reaction from people for when a person chooses a different path in life from others it makes them feel as if their path is bad or evil and this is the reason the person has chosen a different path. Even though the person does not believe this but only chooses a different path believing it is better for them yet they will still face criticism. It is the same reason all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were criticised by their people as they chose and passively invited others to a different better path.

To conclude, as long as one's path in life is lawful they should remain steadfast and not be deterred by the criticism of others. But this does not mean they should not try to improve their situation and character. It means

they should not be deterred from pursuing their lawful choice according to the teachings of Islam.

***“So be patient, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], over what they say...”***

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...”*

***“So be patient, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], over what they say...”***

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

*“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”*

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid a muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”*

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on muslims as taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Finally, those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted, does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their small sins. A muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness and peace of mind in both worlds.

***“So be patient, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], over what they say...”***

Generally speaking, all muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

***“...and exalt [Allāh] with praise of your Lord...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6407, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the difference between the person who remembers Allah, the Exalted, and the one who does not is like a living person compared to a dead person.

It is important for muslims who desire to create a strong connection with Allah, the Exalted, so that they can overcome all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter successfully to remember Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible. Put simply, the more they remember Him the more they will achieve this vital goal.

This is achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The second is by remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue. But the highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This is achieved 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. This requires one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds.

Those who remain on the first two levels will receive reward depending on their intention but they are unlikely to increase the strength of their faith and piety unless they move to the third and highest level of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

***“...and exalt [Allāh] with praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting.”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 574, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever establishes the two cool obligatory prayers will enter Paradise.

The two cool obligatory prayers refer to the dawn and late afternoon obligatory prayers as during these two times the weather is cooler than at other times meaning, before sunrise and before sunset.

Establishing the obligatory prayers includes fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes correctly according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as offering them on time. In fact, offering them as soon as they occur is one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252.

Even though, there are five obligatory prayers which must be established yet, only two have been mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion. This is because these two prayers are arguably the two hardest to establish. The obligatory dawn prayer occurs at a time when most people are asleep. Therefore, it requires much energy and motivation in order to leave one's comfortable bed in order to offer it correctly. The obligatory late

afternoon prayer mostly occurs at a time where most people have completed their working day and have returned home tired. So to leave one's relaxation after a tiring and even stressful day of work in order to correctly offer their obligatory prayer is difficult. Therefore, if one correctly establishes these two prayers they will through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, find it easier to establish the other obligatory prayers, which usually occur at more convenient times.

Muslims should therefore strive to establish all their obligatory prayers as it is the very essence of Islam and it in fact separates belief from disbelief. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618.

***“And [in part] of the night exalt Him and after prostration.”***

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1145, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, descends every night to the nearest Heaven according to His infinite majesty and invites people to ask Him to fulfill their needs so that He can fulfill them.

Voluntary night time worship proves one's sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, as no other eyes are watching them. Offering it is a means to having an intimate conversation with Allah, the Exalted. And it is a sign of one's servanthood to Him. It has countless virtues for example, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614, declares that it is the best voluntary prayer.

No one will have a rank higher on Judgment Day or in Paradise than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and this rank has been directly connected to the voluntary night prayer. This shows that those who establish the night voluntary prayer will be blessed with the highest ranks in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 79:

*“And from [part of] the night, pray with it [i.e., recitation of the Quran] as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.”*

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3579, advises that a muslim is closest to Allah, the Exalted, in the last part of the night. Therefore, one can derive countless blessings if they remember Allah, the Exalted, at this time.

All muslims desire their supplications to be answered and their needs to be fulfilled. Therefore, they should strive to offer the voluntary night prayer as a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1770, advises that there is a special hour in every night when good supplications are always answered.

Establishing the voluntary night prayer is an excellent way to prevent one from committing sins, it helps a person to stay away from pointless social gatherings and it protects a person from many physical illnesses. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3549.

One should prepare for the voluntary night prayer by not over eating or drinking especially, before bed as it induces laziness. One should not unnecessarily tire themselves out during the day. A short nap during the day can help with this. Finally, one should avoid sins and strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as the obedient find it easier to offer the voluntary night prayer.

***“and exalt [Allāh] with praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting. And [in part] of the night exalt Him and after prostration.”***

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.

## Chapter 50 – Qaf, Verses 41-44

وَاسْتَمِعْ يَوْمَ يُنَادِ الْمُنَادِ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ ﴿٤١﴾

يَوْمَ يَسْمَعُونَ الصَّيْحَةَ بِالْحَقِّ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُرُوجِ ﴿٤٢﴾

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِيهِمْ وَنُمِيتُهُمْ وَإِلَيْنَا الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٤٣﴾

يَوْمَ تَشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ سِرَاعًا ذَٰلِكَ حَشْرٌ عَلَيْنَا يَسِيرٌ ﴿٤٤﴾

*“And listen on the Day when the Caller will call out from a place that is near.*

*The Day they will hear the blast [of the Horn] in truth. That is the Day of Emergence [from the graves].*

*Indeed, it is We who give life and cause death, and to Us is the destination.*

*On the Day the earth breaks away from them [and they emerge] rapidly; that is a gathering easy for Us.”*

***“And listen on the Day when the Caller will call out from a place that is near. The Day they will hear the blast [of the Horn] in truth...and to Us is the destination.”***

Listening refers to practically preparing for the Day of Judgement before it arrives. This involves using the blessings one has 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.

***“And listen on the Day when the Caller will call out from a place that is near. The Day they will hear the blast [of the Horn] in truth...and to Us is the destination.”***

Listening refers to practically preparing for the Day of Judgement before it arrives. This involves using the blessings one has 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 listen on the Day when the Caller will call out from a place that is near. The Day they will hear the blast [of the Horn] in truth...and to Us is the destination.”***

The command to listen can also be referring to listening carefully to the description of Judgement Day so that one is urged to practically prepare for it.

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier yet the strength of muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge namely, they believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

***“And listen on the Day when the Caller will call out from a place that is near. The Day they will hear the blast [of the Horn] in truth...and to Us is the destination.”***

The command to listen can also be referring to listening carefully to the description of Judgement Day so that one is urged to practically prepare for it.

Listening correctly to the word of Allah, the Exalted, is the only way one can correctly adhere to its teachings. It is important to understand the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is simply acknowledging a sound with one's mind even if they fail to make sense of the noise. For example, a person may hear someone shouting at them from a great distance but they will not be able to understand what they are saying. Whereas, listening involves hearing a sound and understanding it so that one's behaviour changes. For example, a person giving a specific verbal instruction to another who responds appropriately after hearing and understanding the instructions.

Muslims need to hear the word of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to understand it so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way. Unfortunately, many Muslims have failed to live up to this in respect to the Holy Quran as they are good at hearing the recitation of the Holy Quran but fail to correctly listen to it which involves understanding and acting on its teachings.

To conclude, simply hearing the word of Allah, the Exalted, is not good enough to obtain success one must strive to instead truly listen to it.

***“And listen on the Day when the Caller will call out from a place that is near. The Day they will hear the blast [of the Horn] in truth...”***

Place that is near can indicate that the location and time of the Day of Judgement is not far away. In reality, one’s final judgement begins when they die as they can no longer perform good deeds, such as sincere repentance.

Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The only way to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

***“And listen on the Day when the Caller will call out from a place that is near. The Day they will hear the blast [of the Horn] in truth...”***

Place that is near can indicate that the location and time of the Day of Judgement is not far away. In reality, one’s final judgement begins when they die as they can no longer perform good deeds, such as sincere repentance.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no

one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach Muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

*"And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, "My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous."*

*But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”*

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

***“And listen on the Day when the Caller will call out from a place that is near. The Day they will hear the blast [of the Horn] in truth...”***

Place that is near can indicate that the location and time of the Day of Judgement is not far away. In reality, one’s final judgement begins when they die as they can no longer perform good deeds, such as sincere repentance.

It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of the material world. Unfortunately, muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared.

It is important for muslims to understand that no matter how long they live life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A muslim only fails preparing for the hereafter correctly because of their pursuit of the excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities.

A muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

***“And listen on the Day when the Caller will call out from a place that is near. The Day they will hear the blast [of the Horn] in truth...”***

Place that is near can indicate that the location and time of the Day of Judgement is not far away. In reality, one's final judgement begins when they die as they can no longer perform good deeds, such as sincere repentance.

When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing. Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim they stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that they stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller

who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, muslims do not treat it like one. Instead, they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.

***“And listen on the Day when the Caller will call out from a place that is near. The Day they will hear the blast [of the Horn] in truth. That is the Day of Emergence [from the graves]...On the Day the earth breaks away from them [and they emerge] rapidly; that is a gathering easy for Us.”***

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.

***“And listen on the Day when the Caller will call out from a place that is near. The Day they will hear the blast [of the Horn] in truth. That is the Day of Emergence [from the graves]...On the Day the earth breaks away from them [and they emerge] rapidly; that is a gathering easy for Us.”***

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 listen on the Day when the Caller will call out from a place that is near. The Day they will hear the blast [of the Horn] in truth. That is the Day of Emergence [from the graves]. Indeed, it is We who give life and cause death, and to Us is the destination.”***

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it 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.

***“Indeed, it is We who give life and cause death...”***

Allah, the Exalted, alone created and controls both life and death.

The muslim who understands this divine name will submit and sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience without fearing any of the creation while knowing nothing controls life or death except Allah, the Exalted. In addition, a muslim who recognises this fact will understand that as Allah, the Exalted, chose the beginning and end of every creation He has also chosen everything that occurs in between. The choices of Allah, the Exalted, are unavoidable so one should not become impatient when facing them. Instead they should simply sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in every situation so that they obtain reward with every passing moment. For example, they should demonstrate patience during times of difficulty and demonstrate true gratitude by using the blessings they possess correctly in times of ease. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500.

A muslim should act on this divine name by bringing their spiritual heart to life and cause death to their ego and negative characteristics by striving to remove them from themselves through obtaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“...and to Us is the destination.”***

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 to Us is the destination.”***

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 50 – Qaf, Verse 45 of 45

نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَبَّارٍ فَذَكَرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ  
يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ ﴿٤٥﴾

*“We are most knowing of what they say, are you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are not one to compel them. But remind by the Quran whoever fears My threat.”*

***“We are most knowing of what they say...”***

Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing as nothing escapes His knowledge whether in the Heavens or the Earth whether visible or not. The knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, has no limit, it has no beginning and no end and it is innate meaning, no one gave it to Him. Every creation which possesses knowledge has been granted it by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the creation is limited and has a beginning. Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's outer and inner beings at all time.

The muslim who understands this divine name will refrain from sins both outward and inward rightfully believing Allah, the Exalted, knows all this and will hold them accountable for their actions. In addition, they will not stress about worldly issues understanding that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of them and will respond to them at the right time.

A muslim should act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful knowledge both worldly and religious which is the path of piety. This is the true inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

***“We are most knowing of what they say...”***

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.

***“We are most knowing of what they say...”***

This verse is connected to chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

*“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”*

In this verse Allah, the exalted, explains how people should conduct themselves when conversing with others so that they derive benefit for themselves and others. The first is that when muslims gather they should discuss how to benefit others which encompasses charity in the form of wealth and physical aid. If a muslim is not in a position to help a needy person then this is an excellent way of gaining reward equal to actually helping them. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6800, advises that the one who inspires someone else towards good will be rewarded as if they performed the good action themselves. If one cannot aid someone in difficulty or inspire another to fulfill this task they can at least encourage others to supplicate for the one in need. Supplication for an absent person causes the Angels to pray for the supplicator. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534. This mentality can inspire the group to visit the needy person which provides them with emotional support. This has a powerful psychological impact and provides them with a new mode of strength when dealing with their hardship. The important thing to note is that when one mentions the situation of a needy

person their intention must be to aid them in their hour of need. It should never be for the sake of passing time and making them a target of ridicule.

The second way to gain blessings is when one converses about anything lawful that will provide benefit to someone in this world or the next. This aspect includes advising others to do good and refrain from evil in every aspect of their life.

The third aspect mentioned in this verse involves conversing with others with a constructive mindset which brings people together in a positive way instead of possessing a destructive mindset which causes divisions within society. If a person cannot bring people together in a loving way then the minimum they can do is not cause divisions amongst them. Even this is recorded as a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2518.

In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, advises that reconciling between two opposing muslims for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is superior to voluntary prayer and fasting. Every good thing found within society was the outcome of this pious attitude such as the construction of schools, hospitals and Mosques.

But it is important to note, that a muslim will only obtain the great reward mentioned in this verse when they perform the righteous deeds for the

pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Each person will be rewarded based on their intention not just their physical action. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The insincere muslim will find that on Judgment Day they will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

***“...and you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are not one to compel them...”***

It is important for muslims to understand an important point in respect to advising others. It is the duty of muslims to advise others towards good and forbid evil but a muslim should not behave as if they have been put in charge as controllers over others. This attitude only leads to anger and bitterness especially, when others do not follow their advice. It is best for muslims to discharge their duty by advising others but they should avoid stressing over the outcome of their advice meaning, whether the person acts on their advice or not. If Allah, the Exalted, advised the greatest teacher and guide of mankind namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to stress over the outcome in many places of the Holy Quran how can a muslim claim or behave as if they have been put in charge of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

*“So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”*

The muslim who behaves as a controller will not only become bitter when people fail to follow their advice but it can lead them to giving up advising others which is a duty on all muslims according to their ability.

In addition, this attitude will also cause muslims to neglect themselves and their own duties as they are too busy concerning themselves with the duties of others. Therefore, muslims should remain firm in commanding good and forbidding evil but refrain from observing and bothering about the outcome of their advice.

***“...and you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are not one to compel them...”***

As all people have not been created the same they are bound to disagree on certain things. In matters related to religion and those which differentiate between lawful and unlawful things a muslim must remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of who challenges or disagrees with them. But in matters where the choice is between to lawful worldly options a muslim is entitled to offer their opinion to others when they are requested to. But they should not waste their time nor stress if others disagree with their opinion. When one holds onto these disagreements over time they can cause enmity to build up between people which can lead to fractured and broken relationships. This can even result in the sin of severing ties with people. So in cases like this it is important for muslims to let things go and not harbour a negative feeling towards someone who disagrees with their opinion and choice. They should instead push themself to agree to disagree and move on from the situation without any ill feelings. The one who fails to do this will find themself always arguing and possessing enmity for others as they are bound to disagree with others on certain topics and issues due to a difference in their characteristics and mentality. Understanding and acting on this advice is a branch of finding peace in this world.

***“...But remind by the Qur’ān whoever fears My threat.”***

This indicates that the one who fulfils the rights of the Holy Quran will be protected from divine wrath. In addition, this verse also indicates that the one who truly fears facing the consequences of their actions on the Day of Judgement will sincerely obey and follow the Holy Quran. The one who does not fear it will not bother with the Holy Quran. From this one can judge how much they truly believe in the Day of Judgement.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be

upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

***“...But remind by the Qur’ān whoever fears My threat.”***

This indicates that the one who fulfils the rights of the Holy Quran will be protected from divine wrath. In addition, this verse also indicates that the one who truly fears facing the consequences of their actions on the Day of Judgement will sincerely obey and follow the Holy Quran. Ignorance can prevent one from being positively affected by the warnings given by Allah, the Exalted.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu’ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of

ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

***“...But remind by the Qur’ān whoever fears My threat.”***

This indicates that the one who fulfils the rights of the Holy Quran will be protected from divine wrath. In addition, this verse also indicates that the one who truly fears facing the consequences of their actions on the Day of Judgement will sincerely obey and follow the Holy Quran. Ignorance can prevent one from being positively affected by the warnings given by Allah, the Exalted. This leads to weakness of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart

which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

*“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”*

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“...But remind by the Qur’ān whoever fears My threat.”***

This indicates that the one who fulfils the rights of the Holy Quran will be protected from divine wrath. In addition, this verse also indicates that the one who truly fears facing the consequences of their actions on the Day of Judgement will sincerely obey and follow the Holy Quran. Ignorance can prevent one from being positively affected by the warnings given by Allah, the Exalted, such as failing to differentiate between hope in Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to

obey 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 whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

A specific type of wishful thinking which affected the past nations and even the muslim nation is when a person believes that they can ignore the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, and somehow someone on the Day of Judgement will intercede for them and save them from Hell. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact and has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less even with his intercession some muslims whose punishment will be reduced by it will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil convinces those who do not believe in Judgement Day that even if it occurs they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on that day by

claiming that they were not so bad as they avoided major crimes such as murder. They have convinced themselves that their pleas will be accepted and they will be sent to Paradise even though they disbelieved in Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. This is incredibly foolish as Allah, the Exalted, will not treat the person who believed in Him and tried to obey him like the one who disbelieved in Him. A single verse has erased this type of wishful thinking. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

*“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”*

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

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