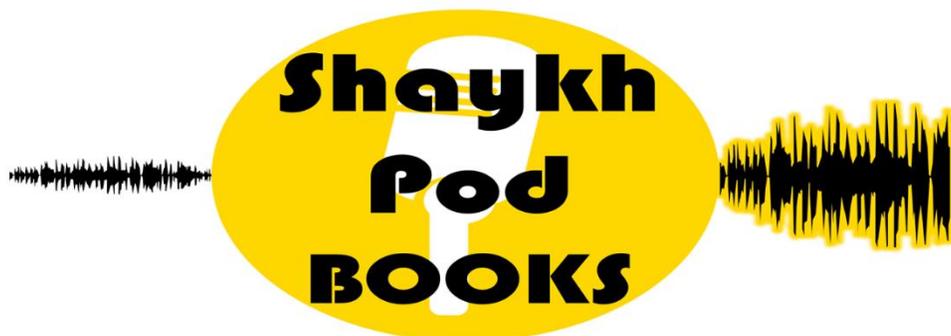


A Quranic Commentary: The Way of Noble Character

**Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat
Verse 1 to
Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah
Verse 11**

PodTafseer - Vol 13



Achieve Noble Character

**A Quranic Commentary: The Way of Noble Character –
Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, Verse 1 to Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah,
Verse 11**

ShaykhPod Books

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A Quranic Commentary: The Way of Noble Character – Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, Verse 1 to Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, Verse 11

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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.

Introduction

The following is a detailed commentary (Tafseer) on Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, Verse 1 to Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, Verse 11 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 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verses 1-6

۱ وَالذَّارِيَاتِ ذُرُورًا

۲ فَالْحَامِلَاتِ وِقْرًا

۳ فَالْجَارِيَاتِ يُسْرًا

۴ فَالْمُقَسَّمَاتِ أَمْرًا

۵ إِنَّمَا تُوْعَدُونَ لَصَادِقٍ

۶ وَإِنَّ الدِّينَ لَوَاقِعٌ

“By the [winds] scattering [clouds], dispersing [it].

And the [clouds] carrying a load [of water].

And the ships sailing with ease.

And the [angels] apportioning [each] matter.

Indeed, what you are promised is true.

And indeed, the recompense is to occur.”

“By the [winds] scattering [clouds], dispersing [it]. And the [clouds] carrying a load [of water]...”

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 the ships sailing with ease.”

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 the [angels] apportioning [each] matter [which they are commanded].”

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, what you are promised is true.”

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.

“Indeed, what you are promised is true.”

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.

“Indeed, what you are promised is true.”

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, what you are promised is true.”

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, what you are promised is true. And indeed, the recompense is to occur.”

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.

“Indeed, what you are promised is true. And indeed, the recompense is to occur.”

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 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.

“Indeed, what you are promised is true. And indeed, the recompense is to occur.”

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.

“By the [winds] scattering [clouds], dispersing [it]. And the [clouds] carrying a load [of water]. And the ships sailing with ease. And the [angels] apportioning [each] matter. Indeed, what you are promised is true. And indeed, the recompense is 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 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 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verses 7-11

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُكِ ﴿٧﴾

إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُّخْتَلِفٍ ﴿٨﴾

يُؤْفِكُ عَنْهُ مَنْ آفِكَ ﴿٩﴾

قُلِ الْخِرَاصُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ سَاهُونَ ﴿١١﴾

“By the heaven containing pathways.

Indeed, you are in differing speech.

Deluded away from it [the Quran] is he who is deluded.

Destroyed are the liars.

Who are within a flood [of confusion] and heedless.”

“By the heaven containing pathways.”

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...”

“Indeed, you are in differing speech.”

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, you are in differing speech.”

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.

“Deluded away from it [the Qur’ān] is he who is deluded.”

This includes the one who fails to fulfil the rights of the Holy Quran thereby failing to obtain peace and success 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.

“Deluded away from it [Islam] is he who is deluded.”

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.”

“Deluded away from it [Islam] is he who is deluded.”

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.

“Deluded away from it [Islam] is he who is deluded.”

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, you are in differing speech. Deluded away by it [differing statements] is he who is deluded.”

These verses can also be interpreted to mean that those who blindly obey the baseless claims of others will become misguided. This therefore 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.”

“Destroyed are the liars.”

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.

“Destroyed are the liars.”

According to Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 9, Page 256, this has also been interpreted to mean destroyed are the doubters. In this respect one must avoid this destruction by striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they 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...”

“Destroyed are the liars. Who are within a flood [of confusion] and heedless.”

Ignorance leads to this behaviour.

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, you are in differing speech. Deluded away from it [faith] is he who is deluded. Destroyed are the liars. Who are within a flood [of confusion] and heedless.”

A major cause of this misguidance 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.

“Indeed, you are in differing speech. Deluded away from it [faith] is he who is deluded. Destroyed are the liars. Who are within a flood [of confusion] and heedless.”

A major cause of this misguidance 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. 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, you are in differing speech. Deluded away from it [faith] is he who is deluded. Destroyed are the liars. Who are within a flood [of confusion] and heedless.”

The non-muslims of Mecca were idol worshippers. 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 decide how they imagine their lifeless idol would like them to live. And this code of conduct is based on nothing but their own 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.

“Indeed, you are in differing speech. Deluded away from it [faith] is he who is deluded. Destroyed are the liars. Who are within a flood [of confusion] and heedless.”

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, you are in differing speech. Deluded away from it [the Quran] is he who is deluded. Destroyed are the liars. Who are within a flood [of confusion] and heedless.”

The non-muslims of Mecca falsely labelled the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a magician, a poet, a madman and a soothsayer. In their heedlessness they could not make their minds up what to label him.

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, poet or soothsayer. 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 where

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?"

Chapter 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verses 12-14

يَسْأَلُونَ أَيَّانَ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿١٢﴾

يَوْمَ هُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ يُفْئِنُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

ذُوقُوا فَنَّتَكُمْ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

"They [mockingly] ask, "When is the Day of Recompense?"

[It is] the Day they will be tormented over the Fire.

[And will be told], "Taste your torment. This is that for which you were impatient."

“They [mockingly] ask, “When is the Day of Recompense?””

The non-muslims of Mecca would ask questions like this in order to put off others from accepting Islam. They foolishly claimed that as the time of the Day of Judgement was unknown it meant that it would not occur. This is as silly as someone denying the reality of death as the exact time of a person’s death is unknown.

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.

“They [mockingly] ask, “When is the Day of Recompense?””

The non-muslims of Mecca would ask questions like this in order to put off others from accepting Islam. They foolishly claimed that as the time of the Day of Judgement was unknown it meant that it would not occur. This is as silly as someone denying the reality of death as the exact time of a person’s death is unknown.

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.

“They [mockingly] ask, “When is the Day of Recompense?” [It is] the Day they will be tormented over the Fire. [And will be told], “Taste your torment. This is that for which you were impatient.””

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.

“They [mockingly] ask, “When is the Day of Recompense?” [It is] the Day they will be tormented over the Fire. [And will be told], “Taste your torment. This is that for which you were impatient.””

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.

“They [mockingly] ask, “When is the Day of Recompense?” [It is] the Day they will be tormented over the Fire. [And will be told], “Taste your torment. This is that for which you were impatient.””

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 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verses 15-19

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿١٥﴾

ءَأَخِذِينَ مَا ءَأَنَّهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ ءِإِنَّهُمْ لَكَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿١٩﴾

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs.

Accepting what their Lord has given them. Indeed, they were before that doers of good.

They used to sleep but little of the night.

And in the hours before dawn they would ask forgiveness.

And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived.”

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs.”

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 among gardens and springs. Accepting what their Lord has given them...”

The one who desires this outcome must obediently accept what Allah, the Exalted, decrees for them in this world.

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.”

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs. Accepting what their Lord has given them...”

The one who desires this outcome must obediently accept what Allah, the Exalted, decrees for them in this world.

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.”

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs...Indeed, they were before that doers of good.”

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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs...Indeed, they were before that doers of good.”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly they must also treat others with good character otherwise they will not succeed as the only truly successful people are the believers.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was

forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be rewarded like the muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs...Indeed, they were before that doers of good.”

This includes adopting excellence of faith.

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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs...They used to sleep but little of the night.”

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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs...They used to sleep but little of the night. And in the hours before dawn they would ask forgiveness.”

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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs...They used to sleep but little of the night. And in the hours before dawn they would ask forgiveness.”

Seeking forgiveness in this way indicates their humility to Allah, the Exalted.

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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs...And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived.”

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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs...And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived.”

All muslims must fulfill the rights of the needy or those who are considered socially weak, such as orphans and widows. Muslims must support them in any way they can.

An aspect of this support is donating the obligatory charity if it is an obligation on them. A muslim must ensure they donate through a reputable and trustworthy organisation or charity.

Many verses and Hadiths discuss the importance of donating voluntary charity such as the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1671. It advises that charity is due every day from each muslim. This same Hadith makes it clear that this charity involves other good deeds not just donating wealth.

Many Hadiths discuss the virtues of supporting orphans and widows. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6005, that whoever takes care of an orphan will be with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in Paradise. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, labelled the home in which

an orphan is taken good care of as the best house in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3679.

In respect to widows, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1969, that the one who supports a widow will be given reward equal to a muslim soldier and the person who fasts every day and prays all night, every night.

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs...And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived.”

Any type of lawful need of others should be fulfilled according to one's strength and if a Muslim finds they cannot provide this aid then they should direct the needy person to someone who can help them. This will ensure they gain the same reward as the one who aids the needy person. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2671. Muslims must sincerely aid others in ways which benefit them solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, without desiring any payback from people as this only leads to their reward being cancelled. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury...”

Simply put, if a Muslim desires the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need then they must strive to aid others when they are in need. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893. But those who turn away from helping others may well be left stranded in their time of need.

If Muslims desire to demonstrate true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, so that they receive an increase in blessings then they must use the blessings they

already possess correctly as prescribed by Islam. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

An aspect of this is helping the needy with whatever one possesses such as good advice.

One should understand a vital point which will prevent them from becoming proud. Namely, the help they offer the needy is not innately theirs. It was created and therefore belongs to Allah, the Exalted, and they must therefore use it according to the wishes of the true owner by helping the needy. In reality, the needy are doing their helper a favor as they will receive reward from Allah, the Exalted. If there was no one in need people would lose out on this method of gaining much reward.

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs...And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived.”

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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs...And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived.”

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]...”

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs. Accepting what their Lord has given them. Indeed, they were before that doers of good. They used to sleep but little of the night. And in the hours before dawn they would ask forgiveness. And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived.”

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, the righteous will be among gardens and springs. Accepting what their Lord has given them. Indeed, they were before that doers of good. They used to sleep but little of the night. And in the hours before dawn they would ask forgiveness. And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived.”

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 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verses 20-21

۲۰ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُوقِنِينَ

۲۱ وَفِي أَنفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ

“And on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith].

And in yourselves [are signs]. Then will you not see?”

“And on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith].”

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 on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith]. And in yourselves. Then will you not see?”

One must use their senses correctly in order to be positively affected by the signs of Allah, the Exalted.

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 on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith]. And in yourselves. Then will you not see?”

One must use their senses correctly in order to be positively affected by the signs of Allah, the Exalted.

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 on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith]. And in yourselves. Then will you not see?”

One must use their senses correctly in order to be positively affected by the signs of Allah, the Exalted.

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 on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith]. And in yourselves. Then will you not see?”

One must use their senses correctly in order to be positively affected by the signs of Allah, the Exalted. Ignorance can prevent this affect.

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 on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith]. And in yourselves. Then will you not see?”

One must use their senses correctly in order to be positively affected by the signs of Allah, the Exalted. This 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 on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith]. And in yourselves. Then will you not see?”

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 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verses 22-23

﴿٢٢﴾ وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ

﴿٢٣﴾ فَوَرَبِّ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْتُمْ نَاطِقُونَ

“And in the heaven is your provision and whatever you are promised.

Then by the Lord of the heaven and earth, indeed, it is truth - just as [sure as] it is that you are speaking.”

“And in the heaven is your provision...Then by the Lord of the heaven and earth, indeed, it is truth - just as [sure as] it is that you are speaking.”

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 in the heaven is your provision...Then by the Lord of the heaven and earth, indeed, it is truth - just as [sure as] it is that you are speaking.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, allocated all things, such as provision, to all creatures over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth.

It is important to understand that there are two aspects in respect to all situations, such as gaining one's provision. The first aspect is what Allah, the Exalted, has decided meaning, destiny; this will occur and nothing in creation can prevent this from occurring. As this is out of a person's hands it makes no sense to stress over this aspect as they have no influence on destiny irrespective of what they or anybody else does.

The second aspect is one's own efforts. This aspect a person has full control over and they should therefore concentrate on this aspect by using the means they have been provided such as their physical strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, which they have no control over, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to gain lawful provision in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents while avoiding the unlawful, excess, waste and extravagance.

To conclude, a muslim should never waste time stressing over things they have no control or influence over instead they should use the means they possess and act on those things which they have control over according to the teachings of Islam. This is what Allah, the Exalted, has commanded.

“And in the heaven is your provision...Then by the Lord of the heaven and earth, indeed, it is truth - just as [sure as] it is that you are speaking.”

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 in the heaven is...whatever you are promised. Then by the Lord of the heaven and earth, indeed, it is truth - just as [sure as] it is that you are speaking.”

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.

“And in the heaven is...whatever you are promised. Then by the Lord of the heaven and earth, indeed, it is truth - just as [sure as] it is that you are speaking.”

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.

“And in the heaven is your provision and whatever you are promised. Then by the Lord of the heaven and earth, indeed, it is truth - just as [sure as] it is that you are speaking.”

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...”

Chapter 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verses 24-30

هَلْ أُنثِكَ حَدِيثُ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا ۗ قَالَ سَلَامٌ قَوْمٍ مُنْكَرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

فَرَاغَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ ۗ فَجَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ سَمِينٍ ﴿٢٦﴾

فَقَرَّبَهُۥٓ إِلَيْهِمْ ۗ قَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

فَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً ۗ قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ ۗ وَبَشَّرُوهُ بِغُلَامٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٨﴾

فَأَقْبَلَتِ امْرَأَتُهُ فِي صَرَۗةٍ فَصَكَتْ ۗ وَجْهَهَا وَقَالَتْ عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

قَالُوا كَذٰلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ ۗ إِنَّهُ ۗ هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٠﴾

“Has there reached you the story of the honored guests of Abraham?”

When they entered upon him and said, "[We greet you with] peace." He answered, "[And upon you] peace; [you are] a people unknown."

Then he went to his family and came with a fat [roasted] calf.

And placed it near them; he said, "Will you not eat?"

And he felt from them apprehension. They said, "Fear not," and gave him good tidings of a learned boy.

And his wife approached with a cry [of alarm] and struck her face and said, "[I am] a barren old woman!"

They said, "Thus has said your Lord; indeed, He is the Wise, the Knowing.""

***“Has there reached you the story of the honored guests of Abraham?
When they entered upon him and said, “[We greet you with] peace.”
He answered, “[And upon you] peace;...””***

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.

***“Has there reached you the story of the honored guests of Abraham?
When they entered upon him and said, “[We greet you with] peace.”
He answered, “[And upon you] peace; [you are] a people unknown.”
Then he went to his family and came with a fat [roasted] calf. And
placed it near them; he said, “Will you not eat?””***

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.”

In addition, it is important to note the manners of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him. He brought the food quickly and did not make the guests wait long and did so while they were unaware that food was being prepared for them. Informing guests that food is being prepared for them will encourage them to forbid the host from troubling themselves. He prepared the best food available for them. He placed the food close to them and not far thereby avoiding inconveniencing them. Nor did he force them to eat but instead gently encouraged them to do so.

“And placed it near them; he [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] said, "Will you not eat?" And he felt from them apprehension [as they did not eat]. They said, "Fear not," and gave him good tidings of a learned boy.”

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 placed it near them; he [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] said, "Will you not eat?" And he felt from them apprehension [as they did not eat]. They said, "Fear not," and gave him good tidings of a learned boy.”

If one desires their child to be a source of good tidings for them in both worlds then they must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, by raising their child according to the teachings of Islam. The most important aspect of 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 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.

“And placed it near them; he [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] said, "Will you not eat?" And he felt from them apprehension [as they did not eat]. They said, "Fear not," and gave him good tidings of a learned boy.”

If one desires their child to be a source of good tidings for them in both worlds then they must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, by raising their child according to the teachings of Islam.

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

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

towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. A muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for teaching their children good manners as their moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly.

In addition, it is extremely difficult to teach good manners to children when they get older and become set in their ways. Today is the day a muslim should truly reflect on the gift they wish to impart to their children and relatives. This is how a muslim sends forward good to the hereafter but also leaves good behind as a righteous child which supplicates for their deceased parent benefits them. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted.

“And placed it near them; he [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] said, "Will you not eat?" And he felt from them apprehension [as they did not eat]. They said, "Fear not," and gave him good tidings of a learned boy. And his wife approached with a cry [of alarm] and struck her face and said, "[I am] a barren old woman!" They said, "Thus has said your Lord; indeed, He is the Wise, the Knowing.””

Generally speaking, 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.

“They said, “Thus has said your Lord; indeed, He is the Wise, the Knowing.””

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 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.

“...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 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verses 31-37

❁ قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

﴿٣٢﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِينَ

﴿٣٣﴾ لِنُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّن طِينٍ

﴿٣٤﴾ مُّسَوَّمَةً عِندَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ

﴿٣٥﴾ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مَن كَانَ فِيهَا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

﴿٣٦﴾ فَمَا وَجَدْنَا فِيهَا غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِّنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

﴿٣٧﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا فِيهَا آيَةً لِلَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ

"[Abraham] said, "Then what is your business [here], O messengers?"

They said, "Indeed, we have been sent to a people of criminals.

To send down upon them stones of clay.

Marked in the presence of your Lord for the transgressors."

So We brought out whoever was in them [i.e., the cities] of the believers.

And We found not within them other than a [single] house of Muslims.

And We left therein a sign for those who fear the painful punishment."

“[Abraham] said, "Then what is your business [here], O messengers?"”

This indicates the importance of being observant over the things which occur in one’s life. The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, understood that multiple Angels were not needed to deliver him the news of a child, which is discussed in the previous verses. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 28:

“...They said, "Fear not," and gave him good tidings of a learned boy.”

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.

“[Abraham] said, "Then what is your business [here], O messengers?" They said, "Indeed, we have been sent to a people of criminals [people of the Prophet Lut, peace be upon him]. To send down upon them stones of clay. Marked in the presence of your Lord for the transgressors." So We brought out whoever was in them [i.e., the cities] of the believers. And We found not within them other than a [single] house of Muslims.”

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 Lut, peace be upon him, and his followers. 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.

“[Abraham] said, "Then what is your business [here], O messengers?" They said, "Indeed, we have been sent to a people of criminals [people of the Prophet Lut, peace be upon him]. To send down upon them stones of clay. Marked in the presence of your Lord for the transgressors." So We brought out whoever was in them [i.e., the cities] of the believers. And We found not within them other than a [single] house of Muslims. And We left therein a sign for those who fear the 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.

“[Abraham] said, "Then what is your business [here], O messengers?" They said, "Indeed, we have been sent to a people of criminals [people of the Prophet Lut, peace be upon him]. To send down upon them stones of clay. Marked in the presence of your Lord for the transgressors." So We brought out whoever was in them [i.e., the cities] of the believers. And We found not within them other than a [single] house of Muslims. And We left therein a sign for those who fear the 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.

“[Abraham] said, "Then what is your business [here], O messengers?" They said, "Indeed, we have been sent to a people of criminals [people of the Prophet Lut, peace be upon him]. To send down upon them stones of clay. Marked in the presence of your Lord for the transgressors." So We brought out whoever was in them [i.e., the cities] of the believers. And We found not within them other than a [single] house of Muslims. And We left therein a sign for those who fear the painful punishment.”

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.

“[Abraham] said, "Then what is your business [here], O messengers?" They said, "Indeed, we have been sent to a people of criminals [people of the Prophet Lut, peace be upon him]. To send down upon them stones of clay. Marked in the presence of your Lord for the transgressors." So We brought out whoever was in them [i.e., the cities] of the believers. And We found not within them other than a [single] house of Muslims. And We left therein a sign for those who fear the painful punishment.”

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.

“[Abraham] said, "Then what is your business [here], O messengers?" They said, "Indeed, we have been sent to a people of criminals [people of the Prophet Lut, peace be upon him]. To send down upon them stones of clay. Marked in the presence of your Lord for the transgressors." So We brought out whoever was in them [i.e., the cities] of the believers. And We found not within them other than a [single] house of Muslims. And We left therein a sign for those who fear the 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.

“So We brought out whoever was in them [i.e., the cities] of the believers. And We found not within them other than a [single] house of 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.

“So We brought out whoever was in them [i.e., the cities] of the believers. And We found not within them other than a [single] house of 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.

“And We left therein a sign for those who fear the painful punishment.”

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.

“And We left therein a sign for those who fear the painful punishment.”

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by 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.

Chapter 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verses 38-40

﴿٣٨﴾ وَفِي مُوسَىٰ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ

﴿٣٩﴾ فَتَوَلَّىٰ بِرُكْنِهِ وَقَالَ سَحَرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ

﴿٤٠﴾ فَأَخَذْنَاهُ وَجُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ

“And in Moses [was a sign], when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority.”

But he turned away with his supporters and said, "A magician or a madman."

So We took him and his soldiers and cast them into the sea, and he was blameworthy.”

“And in Moses [was a sign], when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority.”

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 in Moses [was a sign], when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority. But he turned away...”

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 in Moses [was a sign], when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority. But he turned away...”

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 in Moses [was a sign], when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority. But he turned away with his supporters...”

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.”

“And in Moses [was a sign], when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority. But he turned away with his supporters...”

These verses 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.

“And in Moses [was a sign], when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority. But he turned away with his supporters...”

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 in Moses [was a sign], when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority. But he turned away with his supporters...”

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 in Moses [was a sign], when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority. But he turned away with his supporters and said, "A magician or a madman."”

These verses are connected to chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 32-35:

“So [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] threw his staff, and suddenly it was a serpent manifest. And he drew out his hand; thereupon it was white for the observers. [Pharaoh] said to the eminent ones around him, "Indeed, this is a learned magician. He wants to drive you out of your land by his magic, so what do you advise?””

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.

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 in Moses [was a sign], when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority. But he turned away with his supporters and said, "A magician or a madman."”

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.

“And in Moses [was a sign], when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority. But he turned away with his supporters and said, "A magician or a madman." So We took him and his soldiers and cast them into the sea, and he was blameworthy.”

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 in Moses [was a sign], when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority. But he turned away with his supporters and said, "A magician or a madman." So We took him and his soldiers and cast them into the sea, and he was blameworthy.”

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 in Moses [was a sign], when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority. But he turned away with his supporters and said, "A magician or a madman." So We took him and his soldiers and cast them into the sea, and he was blameworthy.”

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 in Moses [was a sign], when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority. But he turned away with his supporters and said, "A magician or a madman." So We took him and his soldiers and cast them into the sea, and he was blameworthy.”

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 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verses 41-46

﴿٤١﴾ وَفِي عَادٍ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ

﴿٤٢﴾ مَا نَذَرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا جَعَلْتَهُ كَالرَّمِيمِ

﴿٤٣﴾ وَفِي ثَمُودَ إِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَمَنَّعُوا حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ

﴿٤٤﴾ فَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْقَةُ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ

﴿٤٥﴾ فَمَا اسْتَطَعُوا مِنْ قِيَامٍ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنْصِرِينَ

﴿٤٦﴾ وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ مِّنْ قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَسِيقِينَ

“And in ‘Aad [was a sign], when We sent against them the barren wind.
It left nothing of what it came upon but that it made it like disintegrated
ruins.

And in Thamūd, when it was said to them, "Enjoy yourselves for a time."

*But they were insolent toward the command of their Lord, so the
thunderbolt seized them while they were looking on.*

And they were unable to arise, nor could they defend themselves.

*And [We destroyed] the people of Noah before; indeed, they were a people
defiantly disobedient."*

“And in ‘Aad [was a sign], when We sent against them the barren wind. It left nothing of what it came upon but that it made it like disintegrated ruins. And in Thamūd, when it was said to them, "Enjoy yourselves for a time." But they were insolent toward the command of their Lord, so the thunderbolt seized them while they were looking on. And they were unable to arise, nor could they defend themselves. And [We destroyed] the people of Noah before; indeed, they were a people defiantly disobedient.”

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.

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“...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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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.

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

“And in Thamūd, when it was said to them, "Enjoy yourselves for a time." But they were insolent toward the command of their Lord, so the thunderbolt seized them while they were looking 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 in Thamūd, when it was said to them, "Enjoy yourselves for a time." But they were insolent toward the command of their Lord, so the thunderbolt seized them while they were looking on.

A person should not adopt hopes for a long life as this will distract them from preparing for facing the consequences of their actions.

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 in Thamūd, when it was said to them, "Enjoy yourselves for a time." But they were insolent toward the command of their Lord, so the thunderbolt seized them while they were looking on.

A person should not adopt hopes for a long life as this will distract them from preparing for facing the consequences of their actions.

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 in Thamūd, when it was said to them, "Enjoy yourselves for a time." But they were insolent toward the command of their Lord, so the thunderbolt seized them while they were looking on.

A person should not adopt hopes for a long life as this will distract them from preparing for facing the consequences of their actions.

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 in Thamūd, when it was said to them, "Enjoy yourselves for a time." But they were insolent toward the command of their Lord, so the thunderbolt seized them while they were looking on.

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 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verses 47-49

وَٱلسَّمَآءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

وَٱلْأَرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ ٱلْمَهْدُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

وَمِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

“And the heaven We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are [its] expander.

And the earth We have spread out, and excellent is the preparer.

And of all things We created two mates [i.e., counterparts]; perhaps you will remember.”

“And the heaven We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are [its] expander.”

Even though this statement was revealed over 1400 years ago relatively recently it has been proven through science that the universe is constantly expanding. Furthermore, some scientists believe that when this process of expanding reaches its limit the universe will break apart, just like a rope which is pulled snaps after it reaches its limit. Interestingly, this image of the universe breaking apart has been depicted in many verses of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when describing Judgement Day. Chapter 82 Al Infitar, verses 1-3:

“When the sky breaks apart. And when the stars fall, scattering. And when the seas are erupted.”

So this evidence of the universe constantly expanding is a clear sign of Judgement Day.

“And the earth We have spread out, and excellent is the preparer.”

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 of all things We created two mates [i.e., counterparts]; perhaps you will remember.”

As everything in creation has a counterpart, such as the day and night, the Heavens and the Earth, the male and the female, from this one should understand the Creator of all these pairs is Single.

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.

“And the heaven We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are [its] expander. And the earth We have spread out, and excellent is the preparer. And of all things We created two mates [i.e., counterparts]; perhaps you will remember.”

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 the heaven We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are [its] expander. And the earth We have spread out, and excellent is the preparer. And of all things We created two mates [i.e., counterparts]; perhaps you will remember.”

As everything in creation has a counterpart, such as the day and night, the Heavens and the Earth, the male and the female, the world also has a counterpart namely, the hereafter.

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.

“...perhaps you will remember.”

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.

“...perhaps you will remember.”

Gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge will allow a muslim to be positively affected by the signs of Allah, the Exalted. 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 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verses 50-51

فَفِرُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ ^ط إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

﴿٥١﴾

“So flee to Allah. Indeed, I [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] am to you from Him a clear warner.

And do not make [as equal] with Allah another deity. Indeed, I am to you from Him a clear warner.”

“So flee to Allah...”

Constantly turning to Allah, the Exalted, through one’s intentions and actions 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.

“So flee to Allah...”

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.

“...Indeed, I [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] am to you from Him a clear warner.”

One will only benefit from the warnings given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, 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.

“...Indeed, I [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] am to you from Him 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.

“And do not make [as equal] with Allāh another deity...”

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 do not make [as equal] with Allāh another deity...”

Anything which distracts a person from Allah, the Exalted, can be considered an object of 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.

“And do not make [as equal] with Allah another deity...”

Anything which distracts a person from Allah, the Exalted, can be considered an object of worship.

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.”

Chapter 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verses 52-55

كَذَلِكَ مَا أَتَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا قَالُوا سَاحِرٌ أَوْ
بَجُونٌ ﴿٥٢﴾

﴿٥٣﴾ أَتَوَاصَوْا بِهِ؟ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَآغُوتٌ

﴿٥٤﴾ فَنُؤَلِّهِمْ عَنْهُمْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِمَلُومٍ

﴿٥٥﴾ وَذَكَرْ فَإِنَّ الدِّكْرَى نُنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“Similarly, there came not to those before them any messenger except that they said, "A magician or a madman."

Did they tell one another to do this? No! They are a people who exceed all bounds.

So leave them [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] for you are not to be blamed.

And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.”

“Similarly, there came not to those before them any messenger except that they said, "A magician or a madman."”

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.

“Similarly, there came not to those before them any messenger except that they said, "A magician or a madman." Did they tell one another to do this? No! They are a people who exceed all bounds.”

Even though the earlier generations did not instruct the latter generations to reject a Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, yet these verses indicate that when one adopts the same mentality as their predecessors then they will behave just as they did. This therefore indicates the importance of being observant and learning from the actions and behaviour of those who came before in order to avoid the evil consequences they faced, because of their bad conduct, and obtain the good consequences they obtained through their good conduct.

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.

“Similarly, there came not to those before them any messenger except that they said, "A magician or a madman." Did they tell one another to do this? No! They are a people who exceed all bounds. So leave them [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] for you are not to be blamed.”

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 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.

“Similarly, there came not to those before them any messenger except that they said, "A magician or a madman." Did they tell one another to do this? No! They are a people who exceed all bounds. So leave them [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] for you are not to be blamed.”

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.

“Similarly, there came not to those before them any messenger except that they said, "A magician or a madman." Did they tell one another to do this? No! They are a people who exceed all bounds. So leave them [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] for you are not to be blamed.”

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.

“Similarly, there came not to those before them any messenger except that they said, "A magician or a madman." Did they tell one another to do this? No! They are a people who exceed all bounds. So leave them [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] for you are not to be blamed.”

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.

“Similarly, there came not to those before them any messenger except that they said, "A magician or a madman." Did they tell one another to do this? No! They are a people who exceed all bounds. So leave them [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] for you are not to be blamed.”

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 fulfills 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.”

“Similarly, there came not to those before them any messenger except that they said, "A magician or a madman." Did they tell one another to do this? No! They are a people who exceed all bounds. So leave them [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] for you are not to be blamed.”

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 remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits 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.

“And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.”

As a believer learns and acts on Islamic knowledge any reminder they receive will strengthen 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...”

“And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.”

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.

“And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.”

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 remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.”

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 remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.”

Some muslims have adopted a mentality whereby they are always trying to discover different things and teachings in respect to Islam. They purposely seek lectures and knowledge which is supposedly new and different from what they have already experienced. Even though, this is not an evil characteristic it is an attitude which can lead to misguidance. This can occur when one fails to act on the knowledge they have already heard and studied yet strive to experience new Islamic information and knowledge. Simply put, if a muslim has failed to understand and act on what they already know how can learning new things benefit them? Acting on what one has already listened to and studied is the very reason why the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, often repeat key pieces of information. For example, Allah, the Exalted, only needed to command muslims to establish their prayers once yet He has done it many times throughout the Holy Quran. The same way a student cannot progress to the next level or academic year without acting on the knowledge they have already studied a muslim will not be able to progress towards the closeness of Allah, the Exalted, unless they act on the knowledge they already possess even if they search and listen to new things. Some foolishly seek knowledge connected to higher levels of piety without even acting on the basic principles of faith such as, refraining from lying and backbiting.

The Holy Quran has made it clear that revising important information one already possesses is beneficial and the correct attitude as this person is more likely to act on their knowledge than the one who only seeks new knowledge. In fact, this attitude benefits the believers. Therefore, if one does not obtain benefit from being reminded about things they already

know then they must reassess their faith. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 55:

“And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.”

“And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.”

According to the great Companion Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, the source of the reminder is the Holy Quran. This has been discussed in Tanwir Al Miqbas Min Tafsir Ibn Abbas, 51:55, Page 614. This indicates that the believer will benefit from the reminders given in the Holy Quran as they strive to 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 remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.”

The believers use 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.

“And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.”

The believers use 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.

Chapter 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verses 56-58

﴿٥٦﴾ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

﴿٥٧﴾ مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُونِ

﴿٥٨﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ

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

“I do not want from them any provision, nor do I want them to feed Me.

Indeed, it is Allah who is the [continual] Provider, the firm possessor of strength.”

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

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

If a person was hired for a specific job, such as painting a house, they are highly unlikely to receive their wages if they decide to do another duty, such as hovering the house. Even though what they decided to do is not bad but as they have chosen to do a job they were not hired for they will undoubtedly displease their employer. This is simple to understand and accept. Similarly, a muslim has been commanded to fulfill the commands set out in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but if they decide to do something else and neglect this duty irrespective of if the thing they decide to do is lawful, such as pursuing the excess of this material world beyond their needs, doing actions which are different from what have been prescribed in the two divine sources or simply unlawful they should not expect to please Allah, the Exalted, as He has made it clear what muslims should be doing. The same way an employee who decides to do something different should not expect to receive their wages neither should a muslim who decides to strive for anything other than what they have been told to strive for by Allah, the Exalted. The wages in the case of the muslim include blessings, mercy and the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Simply put, if a muslim desires to obtain these wages they must do their job and not busy themselves with other things which either contradicts their duty or things which are different from their duty.

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

A person who experiences a mid-life crisis often questions their purpose and feels 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 I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”

True worship involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. The one who fulfils this purpose will find 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.

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

True worship involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. The one who fulfils this purpose will find 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.

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

True worship involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. The one who fulfils this purpose will find 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.

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

True worship involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. The one who fulfils this purpose will find 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.

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

True worship involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. The one who fulfils this purpose will find 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.

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

This is the nature on which all have been created. 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] - 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 I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”

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 I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me. I do not want from them any provision, nor do I want them to feed Me.”

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 I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me. I do not want from them any provision, nor do I want them to feed Me.”

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 I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me...Indeed, it is Allāh who is the [continual] Provider...”

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 I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me...Indeed, it is Allāh who is the [continual] Provider...”

True worship involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times. One of the things which can prevent one from sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, is fear of not obtaining their provision. This can encourage one to seek it from unlawful sources, which contradicts obedience to Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, allocated all things, such as provision, to all creatures over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth.

It is important to understand that there are two aspects in respect to all situations, such as gaining one's provision. The first aspect is what Allah, the Exalted, has decided meaning, destiny; this will occur and nothing in creation can prevent this from occurring. As this is out of a person's hands it makes no sense to stress over this aspect as they have no influence on destiny irrespective of what they or anybody else does.

The second aspect is one's own efforts. This aspect a person has full control over and they should therefore concentrate on this aspect by using the means they have been provided such as their physical strength to obey

Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, which they have no control over, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to gain lawful provision in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents while avoiding the unlawful, excess, waste and extravagance.

To conclude, a muslim should never waste time stressing over things they have no control or influence over instead they should use the means they possess and act on those things which they have control over according to the teachings of Islam. This is what Allah, the Exalted, has commanded.

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me...Indeed, it is Allāh who is the [continual] Provider...”

True worship involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times. One of the things which can prevent one from sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, is fear of not obtaining their provision. This can encourage one to seek it from unlawful sources, which contradicts obedience to Allah, the Exalted.

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 I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me...Indeed, it is Allāh who is the [continual] Provider...”

True worship involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times. One of the things which can prevent one from sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, is fear of not obtaining their provision.

Prior to migrating to Medina, when the resistance and violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, intensified they openly decided to murder the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Talib, ordered his tribe to bring the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, into their area of Mecca and protect him from the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca and their hideous plan. When the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca became aware of Abu Talib's plan they made a pact that they would not sit down with nor do business with nor enter the homes of the tribe that were protecting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, until they surrendered him for execution. This social boycott carried on for three years during which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, his Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, and even the tribe of Abu Talib suffered greatly. Their markets had been cut off, no food was allowed into their area of Mecca and all their business dealings were disrupted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 27-28.

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me...Indeed, it is Allāh who is...the firm possessor of strength.”

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 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verse 59

فَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُنُوبًا مِّثْلَ ذُنُوبِ أَصْحَابِهِمْ فَلَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ



“And indeed, for those who have wronged is a portion [of punishment] like the portion of their companions, so let them not impatiently urge Me.”

“And indeed, for those who have wronged is a portion [of punishment]...”

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, for those who have wronged is a portion [of punishment] like the portion of their companions...”

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.”

“And indeed, for those who have wronged is a portion [of punishment] like the portion of their companions...”

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 indeed, for those who have wronged is a portion [of punishment] like the portion of their companions [predecessors]...”

This verse also indicates the importance of being observant and learning from the actions and behaviour of those who came before in order to avoid the evil consequences they faced, because of their bad conduct, and obtain the good consequences they obtained through their good conduct.

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 let them not impatiently urge Me.”

The non-muslims of Mecca would foolishly challenge the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to bring the punishment he warned them of. One must avoid this behaviour by avoiding the persistent disobedience of Allah, the Exalted.

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.”

Chapter 51 – Adh Dhariyat, Verse 60 of 60

﴿٦٠﴾ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ يَوْمِهِمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ

“And woe to those who have disbelieved from their Day which they are promised.”

“And woe to those who have disbelieved from their Day which they are promised.”

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 woe to those who have disbelieved from their Day which they are promised.”

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 woe to those who have disbelieved from their Day which they are promised.”

Ignorance can prevent 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.

“And woe to those who have disbelieved from their Day which they are promised.”

Ignorance can prevent 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.

“And woe to those who have disbelieved from their Day which they are promised.”

One must avoid behaving as someone who does not believe in the Day of Judgement 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.

“And woe to those who have disbelieved from their Day which they are promised.”

One must avoid behaving as someone who does not believe in the Day of Judgement 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.

“And woe to those who have disbelieved from their Day 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.

“And woe to those who have disbelieved from their Day which they are promised.”

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 woe to those who have disbelieved from their Day 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.

“And woe to those who have disbelieved from their Day 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.

“And woe to those who have disbelieved from their Day which they are promised.”

In respect to the non-muslims of Mecca, this day could also be referring to the Battle of Badr when 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.

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 woe to those who have disbelieved from their Day which they are promised.”

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 52 – At Tur, Verses 1-6

وَالطُّورِ ١

وَكُتِّبَ مَسْطُورٍ ٢

فِي رَقٍّ مَّنشُورٍ ٣

وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ ٤

وَالسَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوعِ ٥

٦ وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ

“By the mount.

And [by] a Book inscribed.

In parchment spread open.

And [by] the frequented House.

And [by] the ceiling [i.e., heaven] raised high.

And [by] the sea set on fire.”

“By the mount. And [by] a Book inscribed. In parchment spread open.”

The mountain could be referring to Mount Sinai where Allah, the Exalted, spoke to the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him.

The book inscribed could be referring to the Preserved Tablet, which has been inscribed with the decrees of Allah, the Exalted.

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 [by] a Book inscribed. In parchment spread open.”

The book inscribed could also be referring to 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 [by] a Book inscribed. In parchment spread open.”

This could also be referring to one’s book of deeds which will be spread open on 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.”

“And [by] the frequented House.”

During the Heavenly Journey a white beast called Al Buraq was brought to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to ride on. After visiting Masjid Al Aqsa the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, then set off towards the Heavens. When they reached the seventh Heaven the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, observed the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, reclining against the House of Allah, the Exalted, in the Heavens, the Frequented House. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 411.

It is important to note that the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, built the House of Allah, the Exalted, in Mecca, the Kaaba, with his son the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 127:

“And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House...”

Like many other examples found within the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, this incident indicates a basic teaching of Islam namely, what one gives is what they shall receive. Another example is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

“So remember Me; I will remember you...”

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, advises that the one who shows mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by the Creator. Generally speaking, in this material world a person receives things according to their efforts. Yet, strangely some expect to obtain the high ranks of Paradise without any effort. These teachings clearly show that a Muslim will receive blessings and mercy based on their efforts. The more obedient they are to Allah, the Exalted, which 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, the more they will receive in return. There is no doubt that Allah, the Exalted, can give whatever He wants to whomever He wants irrespective of how much they strive in His obedience. But Allah, the Exalted, has set up a system which must be followed namely, striving in His obedience in order to obtain more blessings and mercy. Therefore, each Muslim must reflect and decide how much mercy and blessings of Allah, the Exalted, they desire and then strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, accordingly.

“And [by] the ceiling [heaven] raised high.”

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 [by] the sea set on fire.”

This will occur on the Day of Resurrection. Chapter 81 At Takwir, verse 6:

“And when the seas are filled with flame.”

Generally speaking, one must practically prepare for the Day of Judgement before they run out of time. 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 [by] the sea set on fire.”

This will occur on the Day of Resurrection. Chapter 81 At Takwir, verse 6:

“And when the seas are filled with flame.”

Generally speaking, one must practically prepare for the Day of Judgement before they run out of time. 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 52 – At Tur, Verses 7-8

٧ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ

٨ مَا لَهُ مِنْ دَافِعٍ

“Indeed, the punishment of your Lord will occur.

Of it there is no preventer.”

“Indeed, the punishment of your Lord will occur. Of it there is no preventer.”

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.”

“Indeed, the punishment of your Lord will occur. Of it there is no preventer.”

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, the punishment of your Lord will occur. Of it there is no preventer.”

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, the punishment of your Lord will occur. Of it there is no preventer.”

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 52 – At Tur, Verses 9-16

يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ مَوْرًا ﴿٩﴾

وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْرًا ﴿١٠﴾

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١١﴾

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي خَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

يَوْمَ يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَىٰ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ دَعَاً ﴿١٣﴾

هَذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكذِّبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

أَفَسِحْرٌ هَذَا أَمْ أَنْتُمْ لَا بُصِيرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

أَصْلَوْهَا فَأَصْبِرُوا أَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّمَا تُحْزِنُونَ مَا
كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

“On the Day the heaven will sway with circular motion.

And the mountains will pass on, departing.

Then woe, that Day, to the deniers.

Who are in [empty] discourse amusing themselves.

The Day they are thrust toward the fire of Hell with a [violent] thrust.

This is the Fire which you used to deny.

Then is this [Hell] magic, or do you not see?

[Enter to] burn therein; then be patient or impatient - it is all the same for you. You are only being recompensed [for] what you used to do.”

“On the Day the heaven will sway with circular motion. And the mountains will pass on, departing. Then woe, that Day, to the deniers.”

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.

“On the Day the heaven will sway with circular motion. And the mountains will pass on, departing. Then woe, that Day, to the deniers.”

One must avoid behaving as if they do not believe in the Day of Judgement 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.

“On the Day the heaven will sway with circular motion. And the mountains will pass on, departing. Then woe, that Day, to the deniers.”

One must avoid behaving as if they do not believe in the Day of Judgement 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.

“On the Day the heaven will sway with circular motion. And the mountains will pass on, departing. Then woe, that Day, to the deniers.”

One must avoid behaving as if they do not believe in the Day of Judgement by 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.

“On the Day the heaven will sway with circular motion. And the mountains will pass on, departing. Then woe, that Day, to the deniers.”

One must avoid behaving as if they do not believe in the Day of Judgement by 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.

“On the Day the heaven will sway with circular motion. And the mountains will pass on, departing. Then woe, that Day, to the deniers.”

One must avoid behaving as if they do not believe in the Day of Judgement by 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.

“On the Day the heaven will sway with circular motion. And the mountains will pass on, departing. Then woe, that Day, to the deniers.”

One must avoid behaving as if they do not believe in the Day of Judgement by 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.

“Then woe, that Day, to the deniers. Who are in [empty] discourse amusing themselves.”

This describes the one who lives day after day without pondering, speaking or encouraging others towards preparing for the Day of Judgement. Instead, their eating, sleeping, talking and socialising are focused only on worldly gain and entertainment.

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.

“Then woe, that Day, to the deniers. Who are in [empty] discourse amusing themselves.”

This describes the one who lives day after day without pondering, speaking or encouraging others towards preparing for the Day of Judgement. Instead, their eating, sleeping, talking and socialising are focused only on worldly gain and entertainment.

“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.

“Then woe, that Day, to the deniers. Who are in [empty] discourse amusing themselves.”

This describes the one who lives day after day without pondering, speaking or encouraging others towards preparing for the Day of Judgement. Instead, their eating, sleeping, talking and socialising are focused only on worldly gain and entertainment.

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...”

“Then woe, that Day, to the deniers. Who are in [empty] discourse amusing themselves.”

This describes the one who lives day after day without pondering, speaking or encouraging others towards preparing for the Day of Judgement. Instead, their eating, sleeping, talking and socialising are focused only on worldly gain and entertainment. 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.”

“Then woe, that Day, to the deniers...The Day they are thrust toward the fire of Hell with a [violent] thrust, [its angels will say]. This is the Fire which you used to deny. Then is this magic, or do you not see? [Enter to] burn therein; then be patient or impatient - it is all the same for you. You are only being recompensed [for] what you used to do.””

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 woe, that Day, to the deniers...The Day they are thrust toward the fire of Hell with a [violent] thrust, [its angels will say]. This is the Fire which you used to deny. Then is this magic, or do you not see? [Enter to] burn therein; then be patient or impatient - it is all the same for you. You are only being recompensed [for] what you used to do.””

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 woe, that Day, to the deniers...The Day they are thrust toward the fire of Hell with a [violent] thrust, [its angels will say]. This is the Fire which you used to deny. Then is this magic, or do you not see? [Enter to] burn therein; then be patient or impatient - it is all the same for you. You are only being recompensed [for] what you used to 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.

“Then woe, that Day, to the deniers...The Day they are thrust toward the fire of Hell with a [violent] thrust, [its angels will say]. This is the Fire which you used to deny. Then is this magic, or do you not see? [Enter to] burn therein; then be patient or impatient - it is all the same for you. You are only being recompensed [for] what you used to do.”

Muslims should understand a fact that on Judgment Day they will be judged over their actions, both worldly and religious. But the major and important difference is that their worldly actions, such as obtaining unnecessary and excess wealth and properties, will be turned into dust by Allah, the Exalted. People be judged over their worldly actions and possessions they no longer possess. Can one imagine being sent to Hell over worldly things such as, fame and fortune they no longer possess? The only things which will still be in their possession on Judgment Day and which will aid them in their greatest moment of need are their religious actions meaning, righteous deeds. So each muslim must decide where they should dedicate the majority of their efforts. Either to worldly things and deeds which will perish and turn into dust with this material world while they face the reckoning over them or dedicate the majority of their efforts to religious deeds which will endure and provide them company, shelter and aid on a Great Day. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

“Say, [O Muhammad], “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.”

“Then woe, that Day, to the deniers...The Day they are thrust toward the fire of Hell with a [violent] thrust, [its angels will say]. This is the Fire which you used to deny. Then is this magic, or do you not see? [Enter to] burn therein; then be patient or impatient - it is all the same for you. You are only being recompensed [for] what you used to do.””

The non-muslims of Mecca would accuse the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of being a magician and the Holy Quran nothing but magic.

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?"

“Then woe, that Day, to the deniers... The Day they are thrust toward the fire of Hell with a [violent] thrust, [its angels will say]. "This is the Fire which you used to deny. Then is this magic, or do you not see? [Enter to] burn therein; then be patient or impatient - it is all the same for you. You are only being recompensed [for] what you used to do.””

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 52 – At Tur, Verses 17-28

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَعِيمٍ ﴿١٧﴾

فَكَهِنِينَ بِمَا ءَاتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ وَوَقَّاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ

﴿١٨﴾

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

مُتَّكِنِينَ عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَّصْفُوفَةٍ ۖ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ آَلَحْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ
وَمَا أَلَنَّهُمْ مِّنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ ۚ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ

﴿٢١﴾

وَأَمَدَدْنَاهُمْ بِفِكَهَةٍ ۖ وَلَحْمٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

يَنْزَعُونَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا لَا لَغْوٌ فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْتِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

﴿٢٤﴾ وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ غِلْمَانٌ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لُؤْلُؤٌ مَّكَونٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

﴿٢٥﴾ وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

﴿٢٦﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

﴿٢٧﴾ فَمَنْبَأُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقْنَا عَذَابَ السَّمُومِ ﴿٢٧﴾

﴿٢٨﴾ إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٨﴾

"Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure.

*Enjoying what their Lord has given them, and their Lord protected them
from the punishment of Hellfire.*

[They will be told], "Eat and drink in satisfaction for what you used to do."

*They will be reclining on thrones lined up, and We will marry them to fair
women with large, [beautiful] eyes.*

And those who believed and whose descendants followed them in faith - We will join with them their descendants, and We will not deprive them of anything of their deeds. Every person, for what he earned, is retained.

And We will provide them with fruit and meat from whatever they desire.

They will exchange with one another a cup [of wine] wherein [results] no ill speech or commission of sin.

There will circulate among them [servant] boys [especially] for them, as if they were pearls well-protected.

And they will approach one another, inquiring of each other.

They will say, "Indeed, we were previously among our people fearful [of displeasing Allah]."

So Allah conferred favor upon us and protected us from the punishment of the Scorching Fire.

Indeed, we used to supplicate Him before. Indeed, it is He who is the Most Kind, the Merciful."

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure...Every person, for what he earned, is retained...They will say, "Indeed, we were previously among our people fearful [of displeasing 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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure...Every person, for what he earned, is retained.”

Righteousness is a combination of inward belief which is supported by outward 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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure...Every person, for what he earned, is retained.”

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, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them...”

The one who desires this outcome must obediently accept what Allah, the Exalted, decrees for them in this world.

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.”

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them...”

The one who desires this outcome must obediently accept what Allah, the Exalted, decrees for them in this world.

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.”

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure...and their Lord protected them from the punishment of Hellfire...They will say, “...So Allāh conferred favor upon us and protected us from the punishment of the Scorching Fire.””

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]...”

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure...and their Lord protected them from the punishment of Hellfire...They will say, “...So Allāh conferred favor upon us and protected us from the punishment of the Scorching Fire.””

A muslim must understand that their righteous deeds, which leads them to Paradise, 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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them...[They will be told], "Eat and drink in satisfaction for what you used to do."...And We will provide them with fruit and meat from whatever they desire...There will circulate among them [servant] boys [especially] for them, as if they were pearls well-protected.”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3235, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that feeding others raises one’s rank. Offering food to others is a very special deed and when done sincerely for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, reaps an unimaginable reward. In fact, the Holy Quran has declared that those who do this will be protected from the torment of Judgement Day and blessed with Paradise. Chapter 76 Al Insan, verses 8-12:

“And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive. [Saying], "We feed you only for the face [i.e., approval] of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude. Indeed, We fear from our Lord a Day austere and distressful." So Allah will protect them from the evil of that Day and give them radiance and happiness. And will reward them for what they patiently endured [with] a garden [in Paradise] and silk [garments].”

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.

Muslims should make it a top priority to act on this righteous deed and strive to feed others especially, the poor on a regular basis. This is an amazing deed which does not require much wealth. Each person should feed others according to their capacity even if it is only half a date fruit as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1417, that this will protect them from the fire of Hell on Judgement Day. This leaves people with no excuse from abstaining from this righteous deed.

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them...They will be reclining on thrones lined up...”

Whoever strives hard in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will relax in the next but whoever relaxes in this world will find difficulty in the next.

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.”

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them...They will be reclining on thrones lined up...”

Whoever strives hard in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will relax in the next but whoever relaxes in this world will find difficulty in the next.

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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them...And those who believed and whose descendants followed them in faith - We will join with them their descendants, and We will not deprive them of anything of their deeds. Every person, for what he earned, is retained.”

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 righteous will be in gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them... They will exchange with one another a cup [of wine] wherein [results] no ill speech...”

As evil speech has no place in Paradise it must be avoided in this world also.

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, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them... They will exchange with one another a cup [of wine] wherein [results] no...commission of sin.”

As sins have no place in Paradise they must be avoided in this world also.

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

“Woe to every backbiter, slanderer.”

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

interest, usurping the wealth of orphans, fleeing a battlefield and accusing an innocent woman of fornication.

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

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

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

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

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

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them... They will exchange with one another a cup [of wine] wherein [results] no ill speech or commission of sin.”

Two reasons are mentioned which indicate why intoxicants must be avoided in this world.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3371, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a muslim must never consume alcohol as it is the key to all evil.

Unfortunately, this major sin has increased amongst the muslims over time. This is the key to all evil as it gives rise to other sins. This is quite obvious as a drunk loses control over their tongue and physical actions. One only needs to look at the news to observe how much crime is committed due to drinking alcohol. Even those who drink moderately only cause damage to their bodies which science has proven. The physical and mental diseases associated with alcohol are numerous and cause a heavy burden on the National Health Service and the tax payers. It is the key to all evil as it negatively affects all three aspects of a person namely, their body, mind and soul. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 90:

“O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.”

The fact that drinking alcohol has been placed next to things which are associated with polytheism in this verse highlights how important it is to avoid.

It is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3376, that the one who drinks alcohol regularly will not enter Paradise.

Spreading the Islamic greeting of peace is a key to obtaining Paradise according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 68. Yet, a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 1017, advises muslims not to greet someone who regularly drinks alcohol.

Alcohol is a unique major sin as it has been cursed from ten different angles in a single Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3380. This includes the alcohol itself, the one who produces it, the one it is produced for, the one who sells it, the one who buys it, the one who carries it, the one to whom it is carried to, the one who uses the wealth obtained through selling it, the one who drinks it and the one who pours it. The one who

deals with something that has been cursed like this will not obtain true success unless they sincerely repent.

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them...And they will approach one another, inquiring of each other.”

This is an aspect of sincerity to others which must begin in this world.

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...”

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them...And they will approach one another, inquiring of each other.”

This is an aspect of sincerity to others which must begin in this world.

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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them...And they will approach one another, inquiring of each other.”

These verses also encourage one to adopt good companionship in this world as it leads to good consequences 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 gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them...And they will approach one another, inquiring of each other.”

These verses also encourage one to adopt good companionship in this world as it leads to good consequences in the hereafter.

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 gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them...They will say, "Indeed, we were previously among our people fearful [of displeasing Allāh]...”

This can also be interpreted to mean that during their lives on Earth they remained fearful about their families. This indicates that people must desire for their relatives, such as their children, to achieve religious success as well as worldly success. They must therefore encourage them towards the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by raising them according to Islamic teachings.

For example, 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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them...They will say, "Indeed, we were previously among our people fearful [of displeasing Allāh]...Indeed, we used to supplicate [worship] Him before...””

These are aspects of being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, which must begin in this world.

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, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them...They will say, "...Indeed, it is He who is the Most Kind, 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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and pleasure. Enjoying what their Lord has given them, and their Lord protected them from the punishment of Hellfire. [They will be told], "Eat and drink in satisfaction for what you used to do." They will be reclining on thrones lined up, and We will marry them to fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes. And those who believed and whose descendants followed them in faith - We will join with them their descendants, and We will not deprive them of anything of their deeds. Every person, for what he earned, is retained. And We will provide them with fruit and meat from whatever they desire. They will exchange with one another a cup [of wine] wherein [results] no ill speech or commission of sin. There will circulate among them [servant] boys [especially] for them, as if they were pearls well-protected. And they will approach one another, inquiring of each other. They will say, "Indeed, we were previously among our people fearful [of displeasing Allah]." So Allah conferred favor upon us and protected us from the punishment of the Scorching Fire. Indeed, we used to supplicate Him before. Indeed, it is He who is the Most Kind, the Merciful.”

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 52 – At Tur, Verses 29-32

فَذَكِّرْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا مَجْنُونٍ ﴿٢٩﴾

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ نَّتَرَبَّصُ بِهِ رَيْبَ الْمَنُونِ ﴿٣٠﴾

قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُتَرَبِّصِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

أَمْ تَأْمُرُهُمْ أَحْلَامُهُمْ بِهَذَا أَمْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

“So remind for you are not, by the favor of your Lord, a soothsayer or a madman.

Or do they say [of you], "A poet for whom we await a misfortune of time?"

Say, "Wait, for indeed I am, with you, among the waiters."

Or do their minds command them to [say] this, or are they a transgressing people?"

“So remind...”

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.

“So remind...”

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 remind...”

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 remind for you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are not, by the favor of your Lord, a soothsayer or a madman. Or do they say [of you], "A poet..."...Or do their minds command them to [say] this, or are they a transgressing people?”

These verses mention the inward reality of the non-muslims of Mecca who fully believed that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not any of the things which they accused him of being. Rather, they behaved in this manner in order to put off others 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, poet, soothersayer 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?"

“So remind for you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are not, by the favor of your Lord, a soothsayer or a madman. Or do they say [of you], "A poet..."...Or do their minds command them to [say] this, or are they a transgressing people?”

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 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 remind for you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are not, by the favor of your Lord, a soothsayer or a madman. Or do they say [of you], "A poet..."...Or do their minds command them to [say] this, or are they a transgressing people?”

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 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.

“So remind for you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are not, by the favor of your Lord, a soothsayer or a madman. Or do they say [of you], "A poet..."...Or do their minds command them to [say] this, or are they a transgressing people?”

These verses also indicate the pride of the non-muslims of Mecca who inwardly knew the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not any of the things they accused him of being.

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.

“So remind for you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are not, by the favor of your Lord, a soothsayer or a madman. Or do they say [of you], "A poet..."...Or do their minds command them to [say] this, or are they a transgressing people?”

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 remind for you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are not, by the favor of your Lord, a soothsayer or a madman. Or do they say [of you], "A poet for whom we await a misfortune of time"? Say, "Wait, for indeed I am, with you, among the waiters."”

Generally speaking, desiring evil for others contradicts being sincere to 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 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...”

“So remind for you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are not, by the favor of your Lord, a soothsayer or a madman. Or do they say [of you], "A poet for whom we await a misfortune of time"? Say, "Wait, for indeed I am, with you, among the waiters."”

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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.

“So remind for you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are not, by the favor of your Lord, a soothsayer or a madman. Or do they say [of you], "A poet for whom we await a misfortune of time"? Say, "Wait, for indeed I am, with you, among the waiters."”

In respect to the non-muslims of Mecca, this 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.

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 52 – At Tur, Verses 33-34

﴿ ٣٣ ﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ نَقَّوْلَهُ بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

﴿ ٣٤ ﴾ فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِّثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ

“Or do they say, “He [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] has made it [the Holy Quran] up?” Rather, they do not believe.

Then let them produce a statement like it [the Holy Quran], if they should be truthful.”

“Or do they say, “He [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] has made it [the Holy Quran] up?” Rather, they do not believe.”

These verses mention the inward reality of the non-muslims of Mecca who fully believed that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not any of the things which they accused him of being. Rather, they behaved in this manner as they did not want to oppose their desires by accepting Islam and were trying to put off others 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 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.

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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

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

“Or do they say, “He [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] has made it [the Holy Quran] up?” Rather, they do not believe.”

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.

“Or do they say, “He [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] has made it [the Holy Quran] up?” Rather, they do not believe.”

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.

“Or do they say, “He [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] has made it [the Holy Quran] up?” Rather, they do not believe.”

True belief in the Holy Quran 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.

“Or do they say, “He [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] has made it [the Holy Quran] up?” Rather, they do not believe. Then let them produce a statement like it, if they should be truthful.”

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 52 – At Tur, Verses 35-36

﴿ ٣٥ ﴾ أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمْ الْخَالِقُونَ

﴿ ٣٦ ﴾ أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ

“Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves]?”

Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain.”

“Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves]?”

The same way a simple object cannot be created by itself, such as a painting, nor can the complex human being or the creations found within the Heavens and the Earth.

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.”

“Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain. Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain.”

The same way a simple object cannot be created by itself, such as a painting, nor can the complex human being or the creations found within the Heavens and the Earth.

The non-muslims of Mecca did believe in Allah, the Exalted, yet foolishly associated partners with 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...”

“Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain. Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain.”

The same way a simple object cannot be created by itself, such as a painting, nor can the complex human being or the creations found within the Heavens and the Earth.

The non-muslims of Mecca did believe in Allah, the Exalted, yet foolishly associated partners with Him. 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.

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.

“Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves]? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain.”

The same way a simple object cannot be created by itself, such as a painting, nor can the complex human being or the creations found within the Heavens and the Earth.

The non-muslims of Mecca did believe in Allah, the Exalted, yet foolishly associated partners with Him. 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 were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves]? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain.”

The same way a simple object cannot be created by itself, such as a painting, nor can the complex human being or the creations found within the Heavens and the Earth.

The non-muslims of Mecca did believe in Allah, the Exalted, yet foolishly associated partners with Him. 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.

“Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves]? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain.”

These verses also indicate that even if one believes in Allah, the Exalted, weakness of faith can prevent them from sincerely obeying Him. The root of this 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.

“Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves]? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain.”

These verses also indicate that even if one believes in Allah, the Exalted, weakness of faith can prevent them from sincerely obeying Him.

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 52 – At Tur, Verses 37-38

أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ هُمُ الْمُصَيِّطُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلَّمٌ يَسْتَمِعُونَ فِيهِ فَلْيَأْتِ مُسْتَمِعُهُمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾

“Or have they the depositories [containing the provision] of your Lord? Or are they the controllers [of them]?”

Or have they a stairway [into the heaven] upon which they listen? Then let their listener produce a clear authority [i.e., proof].”

“Or have they the depositories [containing the provision] of your Lord? Or are they the controllers [of them]?”

The non-muslims of Mecca found it hard to believe that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was chosen for Prophethood. They judged him according to worldly standards, such as wealth, instead of recognising his immaculate character and intelligence, things which they did not deny. 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?”

They only behaved in this manner out of envy. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 31:

“And they said, “Why was this Qur’ān not sent down upon a great man from [one of] the two cities?””

For example, the non-Muslim leader of Mecca and uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Jahl, was once asked what his honest opinion was regarding the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran. He replied that his tribe and the tribe of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had always been rivals for social status. They would compete in feeding the poor, helping people, giving charity and other social things. But when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, announced Prophethood how could his tribe compete with that. So because of this worldly competition he swore to never accept the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 367.

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.

“Or have they the depositories [containing the provision] of your Lord? Or are they the controllers [of them]?”

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.

“Or have they the depositories [containing the provision] of your Lord? Or are they the controllers [of them]?”

This verse also warns people not to adopt pride over the worldly things they possess, such as wealth, as they are things which have been granted to them by Allah, the Exalted.

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.

“Or have they the depositories [containing the provision] of your Lord? Or are they the controllers [of them]?”

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 a stairway [into the heaven] upon which they listen?
Then let their listener produce a clear authority [i.e., proof].”***

The beliefs of the non-muslims of Mecca were not based on any evidence, such as divine revelation. They were simply 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.

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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 52 – At Tur, Verse 39



أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَكُمْ الْبَنُونَ

“Or has He daughters while you have sons?”

“Or has He daughters while you have sons?”

The non-muslims of Mecca believed that the Angels were daughters of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore worshipped them. They hated having daughters themselves yet happily ascribed daughters to Allah, the Exalted. This was foolishness on top of foolishness.

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. Whereas, accepting the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, would mean that a person must believe in their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This would force them to lead their life according to the code of conduct of Islam instead of following their own desires. It is this fact that makes people averse towards the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

Generally speaking, 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 52 – At Tur, Verse 40

٤٠ أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِنْ مَّغْرَمٍ مُثْقَلُونَ

“Or do you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], ask of them a payment, so they are by debt burdened down?”

“Or do you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], ask of them a payment, so they are by debt burdened down?”

The fact that they were gaining benefits in both worlds and not being asked for a fee for accepting Islam was another reason why they should have accepted Islam.

Generally speaking, those who desire to spread the word of Islam should never gain knowledge in order to defeat others in debates nor to make others feel unintelligent nor should one seek fame when fulfilling this duty. Otherwise, the knowledge that was meant to bring one closer to Allah, the Exalted, only causes them to act like a hypocrite who pretends to benefit others while only desiring fame. Those who act in this way without sincerely repenting have been warned of Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253.

Alcohol has been declared the mother of evil in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5669, as it opens the door to countless other sins. Similarly, the love for fame through spreading the word of Islam is the mother of evil for scholars. This attitude always leads to other sins such as, lying, backbiting, envy and hypocrisy. Because of their incorrect intention these people will never accept the truth from another as they fear the latter will gain more fame than them. This leads them to arguing against the truth by twisting the verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, out of context. When one fails to adhere to the etiquettes of spreading the word of Islam Allah, the Exalted, removes the light of faith from their heart. Instead of their

knowledge leading them towards light and the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, it only leads them to darkness. The worse thing is that when the outside world observes these people they may well believe that this was the attitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, and the righteous predecessors. Spreading this false belief to others will only lead to more difficulty for the person. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 256, that the worse parts of Hell will be reserved for those who used their knowledge of the Holy Quran for the sake of fame.

Unfortunately, some people seek compensation for their deeds from others whereas the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and the righteous never demanded compensation from people. They only desired to please Allah, the Exalted, and hoped in reward from Him alone. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 164:

“And I do not ask you for it any payment. My payment is only from the Lord of the worlds.”

One must always aim to please Allah, the Exalted. This intention alone will determine whether they receive reward or not from Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once described the judgment of a person who dedicated his life to gaining and spreading knowledge in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923. As he desired compensation from people in the form of fame Allah, the Exalted, will declare that there is no reward for him in the hereafter because of his bad intention. The man will then be hurled into Hell.

Unfortunately, some not only intend for material benefit but also purposely offer advice which pleases people and withhold the advice which would displease them even though it is the truth. This is not considered spreading the word of Islam and will only lead to the wrath of Allah, the Exalted.

“Or do you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], ask of them a payment, so they are by debt burdened down?”

The fact that they were gaining benefits in both worlds and not being asked for a fee for accepting Islam was another reason why they should have accepted Islam.

In addition, this verse indicates the importance of being sincere to Allah, the Exalted.

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 52 – At Tur, Verse 41

﴿٤١﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ

“Or have they [knowledge of] the unseen, so they write [it] down?”

“Or have they [knowledge of] the unseen, so they write [it] down?”

The unseen are things which cannot be perceived through the five senses in this world for example, Hell. They must be accepted as true the knowledge of which was brought and confirmed by the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This is another indication that right guidance is not possible without following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as the knowledge regarding the unseen, such as the existence of Hell, can only be delivered by the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. The unseen must stay hidden in this life. If they are revealed then the concept of faith becomes meaningless as faith involves belief in something which is beyond the perception of the five senses.

The beliefs of the non-muslims of Mecca were not based on any evidence, such as divine revelation. They were simply 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.

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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 52 – At Tur, Verse 42

﴿٤٢﴾ أَمْ يُرِيدُونَ كَيْدًا ۖ فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَكِيدُونَ

“Or do they intend a plan? But those who disbelieve - they are the object of a plan.”

“Or do they intend a plan? But those who disbelieve - they are the object of a plan.”

The leaders of the non-muslims of Mecca plotted many evil plans against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

For example, 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.

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 intend a plan? But those who disbelieve - they are the object of a plan.”

The leaders of the non-muslims of Mecca plotted many evil plans 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.

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 do they intend a plan? But those who disbelieve - they are the object of a plan.”

The leaders of the non-muslims of Mecca plotted many evil plans against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The final part of this verse 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.

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 they intend a plan? But those who disbelieve - they are the object of 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...”

Chapter 52 – At Tur, Verse 43

﴿٤٣﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهُ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

“Or have they a deity other than Allah? Exalted is Allah above whatever they associate with Him.”

“Or have they a deity other than Allah?...”

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. Whereas, accepting the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, would mean that a person must believe in their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This would force them to lead their life according to the code of conduct of Islam instead of following their own desires. It is this fact that makes people averse towards the Oneness of 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.

“Or have they a deity other than Allah? Exalted is Allah above whatever they associate with Him.”

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.

“Or have they a deity other than Allah? Exalted is Allah above whatever they associate with 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.

“Or have they a deity other than Allah? Exalted is Allah above whatever they associate with Him.”

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.

Chapter 52 – At Tur, Verse 44

وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَّرْكُومٌ ﴿٤٤﴾

“And if they were to see a fragment from the sky falling, they would say, “[It is merely] clouds heaped up.””

“And if they were to see a fragment from the sky falling, they would say, “[It is merely] clouds heaped up.””

This verse indicates the attitude of a stubborn person who has already made their mind up irrespective of the evidence which is presented to them. The non-Muslims of Mecca behaved in this manner even in the face of such clear evidences. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verses 14-15:

“And [even] if We opened to them a gate from the heaven and they continued therein to ascend. They would say, “Our eyes have only been dazzled. Rather, we are a people affected by magic.””

For example, the non-Muslims of Mecca desired the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to show them a miracle, other than the Holy Quran, in order to confirm his declaration. He showed them the splitting of the Moon. Even after this obvious sign they simply claimed he tricked their eyes. During this time chapter 54 Al Qamar, verses 1-3, were revealed:

“The Hour has come near, and the moon has split [in two]. And if they see a sign [i.e., miracle], they turn away and say, “Passing magic.” And they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a [time of] settlement.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 77-78. And a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3637, also discusses this event.

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 if they were to see a fragment from the sky falling, they would say, “[It is merely] clouds heaped up.””

This verse indicates the attitude of a stubborn person who has already made their mind up irrespective of the evidence which is presented to them. The non-muslims of Mecca behaved in this manner even in the face of such clear evidences. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verses 14-15:

“And [even] if We opened to them a gate from the heaven and they continued therein to ascend. They would say, “Our eyes have only been dazzled. Rather, we are a people affected by 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.

Chapter 52 – At Tur, Verses 45-47

فَذَرَّهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي فِيهِ يُصْعَقُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

وَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عَذَابًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

“So leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible.

The Day their plan will not avail them at all, nor will they be helped.

And indeed, for those who have wronged is a punishment before that [Judgement Day], but most of them do not know.”

“So leave 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.

“So leave them...”

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...”

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.

“So leave 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:

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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:

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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.

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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 until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible. The Day their plan will not avail them at all, nor will they be helped.”

One must practically prepare for the Day of Judgement in order to avoid this outcome. 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.

“So leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible. The Day their plan will not avail them at all, nor will they be helped.”

One must practically prepare for the Day of Judgement in order to avoid this outcome. 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.

“So leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible. The Day their plan will not avail them at all, nor will they be helped.”

One must practically prepare for the Day of Judgement in order to avoid this outcome. An aspect of this is adopting hope in Allah, the Exalted, and avoiding 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.”

“So leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible. The Day their plan will not avail them at all, nor will they be helped.”

One must practically prepare for the Day of Judgement in order to avoid this outcome.

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 leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible. The Day their plan will not avail them at all, nor will they be helped.”

One must practically prepare for the Day of Judgement in order to avoid this outcome.

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 leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible. The Day their plan will not avail them at all, nor will they be helped.”

One must practically prepare for the Day of Judgement in order to avoid this outcome.

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 leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible. The Day their plan will not avail them at all, nor will they be helped.”

One must practically prepare for the Day of Judgement in order to avoid this outcome.

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 leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible. The Day their plan will not avail them at all, nor will they be helped.”

One must practically prepare for the Day of Judgement in order to avoid this outcome.

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.

“So leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible...And indeed, for those who have wronged is a punishment before that, but most of them do not know.”

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 leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible...And indeed, for those who have wronged is a punishment before that, but most of them do not know.”

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 leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible...And indeed, for those who have wronged is a punishment before that, but most of them do not 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.

“So leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible...And indeed, for those who have wronged is a punishment before that, but most of them do not know.”

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 leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible...And indeed, for those who have wronged is a punishment before that, but most of them do not know.”

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 leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible...And indeed, for those who have wronged is a punishment before that, but most of them do not know.”

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 leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible...And indeed, for those who have wronged is a punishment before that, but most of them do not know.”

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 leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible...And indeed, for those who have wronged is a punishment before that, but most of them do not know.”

This could also be referring to the punishment of the grave.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2460, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a grave is either a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hell. This Hadith further explains that when a successful believer is placed in their grave it widens and becomes comfortable for them whereas, the grave of a sinful person becomes extremely constricted and harmful for them.

It is important to note, that in reality each person takes the garden of Paradise or pit of Hell with them when they depart this world namely, their deeds. If a muslim obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then it will ensure they prepare the deeds required to make their grave a garden of Paradise. But if they disobey Allah, the Exalted, then their sins will create the pit of Hell they will rest in until the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, muslims must act today and not delay in this preparation as the time of death is unknown and often comes suddenly. Delaying to a tomorrow one may not see is foolish and it only leads to regrets. The same way a person spends much energy and time beautifying their

home in this world they must strive harder in beautifying their grave as the journey there is inevitable and the stay there long. And if one suffers in their grave then what follows will only be worse. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4267.

“So leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible...And indeed, for those who have wronged is a punishment before that, but most of them do not know.”

These verses criticise ignorance as it leads to trouble 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.

“So leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible...And indeed, for those who have wronged is a punishment before that, but most of them do not know.”

These verses criticise ignorance as it leads to trouble in both worlds. 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.

“So leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck insensible...And indeed, for those who have wronged is a punishment before that, but most of them do not know.”

In respect to the non-muslims of Mecca, this 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 52 – At Tur, Verses 48-49 of 49

وَأَصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ



وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَإِدْبَرَ النُّجُومِ



*“And be patient for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are in Our eyes [i.e., sight].
And exalt [Allah] with praise of your Lord when you arise.*

And in a part of the night exalt Him and after [the setting of] the stars.”

“And be patient for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are in Our eyes [sight]...”

Whenever a muslim encounters 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.

“And be patient for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are in Our eyes [sight]...”

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 be patient for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are in Our eyes [sight]...”

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 be patient for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are in Our eyes [sight]...”

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

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

“And be patient for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are in Our eyes [sight]...”

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

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

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

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

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

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

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

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

The one who is content does not desire things to change as they know the choice of Allah, the Exalted, is better than their choice. This muslim firmly

believes and acts on the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. It advises that every situation is best for the believer. If they encounter a problem they should show patience which leads to blessings. And if they experience times of ease they should show gratitude which also leads to blessings.

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

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

A muslim will never reach full contentment until 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.

“And be patient for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are in Our eyes [sight]...”

In a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the importance of understanding that every difficulty a person faces will be followed by ease. This reality has also been mentioned in the Holy Quran for example, chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 7:

“...Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease [i.e., relief].”

It is important for muslims to understand this reality as it gives rise to patience and even contentment. Being uncertain over the changes in circumstances can lead one to impatience, ingratitude and even towards unlawful things, such as unlawful provision. But the one who firmly believes all difficulties will eventually be replaced with ease will patiently wait for this change fully trusting in the teachings of Islam. This patience is much loved by Allah, the Exalted, and greatly rewarded. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 146:

“...And Allah loves the steadfast.”

This is the reason Allah, the Exalted, has mentioned numerous examples within the Holy Quran when difficult situations were followed by ease and blessings. For example, the following verse of the Holy Quran mentions the great difficulty the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, faced from his people and how Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the great flood. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 76:

“And [mention] Noah, when he called [to Allah] before [that time], so We responded to him and saved him and his family from the great affliction [i.e., the flood].”

Another example is found in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 69:

“We [i.e., Allah] said, “O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.”

The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, faced a great difficulty in the form of a great fire but Allah, the Exalted, made it cool and peaceful for him.

These examples and many more have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that muslims understand that a moment of difficulty will eventually be followed by ease for those who obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Therefore, it is important for muslims to study these Islamic teachings in order to observe the countless cases where Allah, the Exalted, granted ease to His obedient servants after they faced difficulties. If Allah, the Exalted, has saved His obedient servants from great difficulties mentioned in the divine teachings then He can and will save the obedient muslims facing smaller difficulties also.

“And be patient for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are in Our eyes [sight]...”

The one who sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, will be empowered to deal with any issue they may face.

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 be patient for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are in Our eyes [sight]...”

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 be patient for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] are in Our eyes [sight]...”

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 exalt [Allāh] with praise of your Lord when you arise. And in a part of the night exalt Him and after [the setting of] the stars.”

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 when you arise. And in a part of the night exalt Him and after [the setting of] the stars.”

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.

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 53 – An Najm, Verses 1-18

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ۝١

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ ۝٢

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۝٣

إِن هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ۝٤

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ ۝٥

ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ ۖ

٦

وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ ۖ

٧

ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّىٰ

٨

فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ ۖ

٩

فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ ۖ

١٠

مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ ۖ

١١

أَفْتَمِرُونَهُ، عَلَى مَا يَرَى ١٢

وَلَقَدْ رَءَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى ١٣

عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى ١٤

عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى ١٥

إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى ١٦

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى ١٧



لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى

“By the star when it descends.

Your companion [i.e., Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] has not strayed, nor has he erred.

Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination.

It is not but a revelation revealed.

Taught to him by one intense in strength.

One of soundness. And he rose.

While he was in the higher [part of the] horizon.

Then he approached and descended.

And was at a distance of two bow lengths or nearer.

And He revealed to His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] what He revealed.

The heart did not lie [about] what it saw.

So will you dispute with him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] over what he saw?

And he certainly saw him in another descent.

At the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary.

Near it is the Garden of Refuge.

When there covered the Lote Tree that which covered [it].

*The sight [of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]
did not swerve, nor did it transgress [its limit].*

He certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.”

“By the star when it descends. Your companion [i.e., Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] has not strayed, nor has he erred...And he rose. While he was in the higher [part of the] horizon. Then he approached and descended. And was at a distance of two bow lengths or nearer. And He revealed to His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] what He revealed. The heart did not lie [about] what it saw. So will you dispute with him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] over what he saw? And he certainly saw him in another descent. At the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary. Near it is the Garden of Refuge. When there covered the Lote Tree that which covered [it]. The sight [of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] did not swerve, nor did it transgress [its limit]. He certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.”

It is clear these verses discuss the Heavenly Journey of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But there are differing opinions regarding who the pronouns refer to in these verses meaning, Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and/or the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him.

During the Heavenly Journey a white beast called Al Buraq was brought to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to ride on. After visiting Masjid Al Aqsa the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, then set off towards the Heavens. They eventually ascended beyond the seventh Heaven until they reached the Lote Tree. Then the Irresistible, the Lord of Honour and Majesty approached and came closer till He was about two bow lengths or even nearer (to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him). This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7517.

Scholars have debated for many generations whether the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was blessed with physically observing Allah, the Exalted, and/or the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, in his true form during the Heavenly Journey. Both sides have presented proofs supporting their views.

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

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

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

In addition, the Heavenly Journey has been extensively discussed within the teachings of Islam and many lessons can be learned from it. The first thing to note is that muslims should never doubt the power of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to solving their problems and granting them a way out of

difficulties. This Heavenly Journey sounds impossible yet it occurred as nothing is beyond the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. The condition for being granted a way out of all difficulties is sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out”

The next important thing to note is that this great event and the verse quoted at the beginning indicate 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 Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with it. This has been indicated in 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.”

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 213, discusses a specific part of the Heavenly Journey. This is when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was gifted the obligatory prayers. The fact that this was the only obligatory duty which was given in this way while the rest were revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while he was on Earth shows the importance of establishing the obligatory prayers. This specific Hadith advises that initially fifty obligatory prayers were commanded and bit by bit they were reduced until five remained. If a muslim had to perform fifty obligatory prayers every day it would prevent them from doing anything else. This shows the importance of the obligatory prayers. It teaches muslims that the obligatory prayers must be the centre of their life. One should mould their life around their obligatory prayers and not mould their duties around their life.

In addition, the obligatory prayers are an indication of how one should attach to Allah, the Exalted, while detaching from the material world. A muslim praying is not allowed to talk, eat or do other normal lawful things during the prayer. This indicates the importance of one connecting to Allah, the Exalted, through fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Being initially commanded to fulfil fifty daily obligatory prayers reminds muslims that this obedience and connection to Allah, the Exalted, should be their top priority and all other things should be placed in their rightful place according to the teachings of Islam. This is the true purpose of mankind. Their purpose is not to strive for the unnecessary and vain things of this material world. This material world is a bridge which connects one to the hereafter. It is not a permanent home. The obligatory prayers and this great event remind muslims of this fact. Therefore, they should strive in crossing this bridge

according to the teachings of Islam so that they can reach the hereafter safely.

“Your companion [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] has not strayed, nor has he erred.”

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?"

“Nor does he [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed. Taught to him by One intense in strength. One of soundness...”

These verses indicate the importance of sincerely obeying and following the two things revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as their origins are divine. 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.

“It is not but a revelation revealed. Taught to him by One intense in strength. One of soundness...”

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 he revealed to His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] what he revealed.”

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 Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with it. This has been indicated in 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.”

“So will you dispute with him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] over what he saw?”

After completing the Heavenly Journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, informed the people of Mecca of this miraculous event. The non-Muslims of Mecca refuted his claim and tested him by asking him questions about Jerusalem and Masjid Al Aqsa as they knew he had never visited there before the Heavenly Journey. As they were asking detailed questions which no one who has visited there would even notice Allah, the Exalted, displayed Jerusalem to him while he was discussing this issue with them. He then answered their questions and described it to them in detail while he was looking at Jerusalem. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3886.

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.

“The sight [of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] did not swerve, nor did it transgress [its limit].”

The sight of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was only ever fixed on pleasing Allah, the Exalted. This 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.

“The sight [of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] did not swerve, nor did it transgress [its limit].”

The sight of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was only ever fixed on pleasing Allah, the Exalted. This is an aspect of 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.”

“He [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.”

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.

“He [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.”

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.

“He [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.”

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.

“He [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.”

Generally speaking, ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by the signs of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to weakness 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 53 – An Najm, Verses 19-23

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ ﴿١٩﴾

وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾

أَلَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَىٰ ﴿٢١﴾

تِلْكَ إِذَا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَىٰ ﴿٢٢﴾

إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءُ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَءَابَاؤُكُمْ مَّا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا
مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ
وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ الْهُدَىٰ ﴿٢٣﴾

“So have you considered [the idols] al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā?

And [the idol] Manāt, the third - the other one?

Is the male for you and for Him the female?

That, then, is an unjust division.

They are not but [mere] names you have named them - you and your forefathers - for which Allah has sent down no authority. They follow not except assumption and what [their] souls desire, and there has already come to them from their Lord guidance.”

“So have you considered [the idols] al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā? And [the idol] Manāt, the third - the other one? Is the male for you and for Him the female? That, then, is an unjust division.”

The non-muslims of Mecca believed that the Angels were daughters of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore worshipped them. They hated having daughters themselves yet happily ascribed daughters to Allah, the Exalted. This was foolishness on top of foolishness.

Generally speaking, 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.

“So have you considered [the idols] al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā? And [the idol] Manāt, the third - the other one?...They are not but [mere] names you have named them - you and your forefathers - for which Allah has sent down no authority. They follow not except assumption and what [their] souls desire, and there has already come to them from their Lord guidance.”

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. Whereas, accepting the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, would mean that a person must believe in their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This would force them to lead their life according to the code of conduct of Islam instead of following their own desires. It is this fact that makes people averse towards the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, another major cause of this outcome 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.

“So have you considered [the idols] al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā? And [the idol] Manāt, the third - the other one?...They are not but [mere] names you have named them - you and your forefathers - for which Allah has sent down no authority. They follow not except assumption and what [their] souls desire, and there has already come to them from their Lord guidance.”

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In addition, another major cause of this outcome 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.

“So have you considered [the idols] al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā? And [the idol] Manāt, the third - the other one?...They are not but [mere] names you have named them - you and your forefathers - for which Allah has sent down no authority. They follow not except assumption and what [their] souls desire, and there has already come to them from their Lord guidance.”

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Muslims must avoid behaving like the idol of worshippers of Mecca 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.

“So have you considered [the idols] al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā? And [the idol] Manāt, the third - the other one?...They are not but [mere] names you have named them - you and your forefathers - for which Allah has sent down no authority. They follow not except assumption and what [their] souls desire, and there has already come to them from their Lord guidance.”

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. Whereas, accepting the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, would mean that a person must believe in their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This would force them to lead their life according to the code of conduct of Islam instead of following their own desires. It is this fact that makes people averse towards the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

Muslims must avoid behaving like the idol of worshippers of Mecca 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.

“So have you considered [the idols] al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā? And [the idol] Manāt, the third - the other one?...They are not but [mere] names you have named them - you and your forefathers - for which Allah has sent down no authority. They follow not except assumption and what [their] souls desire, and there has already come to them from their Lord guidance.”

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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.

“...They follow not except assumption and what [their] souls desire, and there has already come to them from their Lord guidance.”

The root of this behaviour 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:

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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.

“...They follow not except assumption and what [their] souls desire, and there has already come to them from their Lord guidance.”

The root of this behaviour 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 53 – An Najm, Verses 24-25

﴿٢٤﴾ أَمْ لِلْإِنسَانِ مَا تَمَنَّى

﴿٢٥﴾ فَلِلَّهِ الْآخِرَةُ وَالْأُولَى

“Or is there for man whatever he wishes?”

Rather, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first [life].”

“Or is there for man whatever he wishes? Rather, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first [life].”

These verses criticise wishful thinking. One must avoid this attitude and instead adopt hope in Allah, the Exalted, through His sincere obedience.

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.”

“Or is there for man whatever he wishes? Rather, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first [life].”

These verses criticise wishful thinking. One must avoid this attitude and instead adopt hope in Allah, the Exalted, through His sincere 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.

“Or is there for man whatever he wishes? Rather, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first [life].”

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.

“Or is there for man whatever he wishes? Rather, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first [life].”

These verses indicate that obtaining peace and success, which all people desire, lies in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

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 is there for man whatever he wishes? Rather, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first [life].”

These verses indicate that obtaining peace and success, which all people desire, lies in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

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 is there for man whatever he wishes? Rather, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first [life].”

These verses indicate that obtaining peace and success, which all people desire, lies in sincerely obeying 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.

“Or is there for man whatever he wishes? Rather, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first [life].”

These verses indicate that obtaining peace and success, which all people desire, lies in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

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 is there for man whatever he wishes? Rather, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first [life].”

These verses indicate that obtaining peace and success, which all people desire, lies in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

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.

“Or is there for man whatever he wishes? Rather, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first [life].”

These verses indicate that obtaining peace and success, which all people desire, lies in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

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.

“Or is there for man whatever he wishes? Rather, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first [life].”

These verses indicate that obtaining peace and success, which all people desire, lies in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Allah, the Exalted, is the Abaser and the Exalter. Allah, the Exalted, is the One who abases those who disobey Him. Even if a disobedient person gains some worldly success it will ultimately become a curse for them. Allah, the Exalted, is the One who exalts those who obey Him by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Even if an obedient muslim faces trials and difficulties in the world they will ultimately be exalted by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

A muslim who understands this divine name will therefore not seek worldly success by pleasing the creation or through worldly things if it leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, as they know this path only leads to ultimate abasement and disgrace in both worlds.

A muslim must act on this divine name by praising the things which Allah, the Exalted, has raised and disliking the things which Allah, the Exalted, has abased. This must be shown through actions not just words. For example, they must praise the hereafter by actively striving to prepare for it. And they must dislike the excess of this material world knowing Allah, the

Exalted, has dispraised it as it prevents a muslim from adequately preparing for the hereafter.

“Or is there for man whatever he wishes? Rather, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first [life].”

These verses indicate that obtaining peace and success, which all people desire, lies in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

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, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first [life].”

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 53 – An Najm, Verses 26-28

وَكَمْ مِنْ مَلَكٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ لَا تُغْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا
إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَى ﴿٢٦﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ لَيُسَمُّونَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةً الْأُنثَى
﴿٢٧﴾

وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا لَظَنٌ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا
يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا ﴿٢٨﴾

“And how many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession will not avail at all except [only] after Allah has permitted [it] to whom He wills and approves.

Indeed, those who do not believe in the Hereafter name the angels female names.

And they have thereof no knowledge. They follow not except assumption, and indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all.”

“And how many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession will not avail at all except [only] after Allah has permitted [it] to whom He wills and approves. Indeed, those who do not believe in the Hereafter name the angels female names. And they have thereof no knowledge. They follow not except assumption, and indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all.”

The non-muslims of Mecca believed that the Angels were daughters of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore worshipped them hoping they would achieve peace and success in both worlds through 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 decide 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. Whereas, accepting the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, would mean that a person must believe in their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This would force them to lead their life according to the code of conduct of Islam instead of following their own desires. It is this fact that makes people averse towards the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, another major cause of this outcome 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.

“And how many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession will not avail at all except [only] after Allah has permitted [it] to whom He wills and approves. Indeed, those who do not believe in the Hereafter name the angels female names. And they have thereof no knowledge. They follow not except assumption, and indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all.”

The non-muslims of Mecca believed that the Angels were daughters of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore worshipped them hoping they would achieve peace and success in both worlds through 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. Whereas, accepting the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, would mean that a person must believe in their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This would force them to lead their life according to the code of conduct of Islam instead of following their own desires. It is this fact that makes people averse towards the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, another major cause of this outcome 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 they have thereof no knowledge. They follow not except assumption, and indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all.”

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 have thereof no knowledge. They follow not except assumption, and indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all.”

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 they have thereof no knowledge. They follow not except assumption, and indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all.”

Ignorance leads to assumptions about Allah, the Exalted, and the Day of Judgement which are simply not true.

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 they have thereof no knowledge. They follow not except assumption, and indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all.”

Ignorance leads to assumptions about Allah, the Exalted, and the Day of Judgement which are simply not true.

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 they have thereof no knowledge. They follow not except assumption, and indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all.”

Ignorance leads to assumptions about Allah, the Exalted, and the Day of Judgement which are simply not true. One must avoid this behaviour 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.

“And they have thereof no knowledge. They follow not except assumption, and indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all.”

Ignorance leads to assumptions about Allah, the Exalted, and the Day of Judgement which are simply not true. One must avoid this behaviour 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.

“And they have thereof no knowledge. They follow not except assumption, and indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all.”

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.

“And they have thereof no knowledge. They follow not except assumption, and indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all.”

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

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

Therefore, this statement applied to them and the youngsters in those days benefited if they acted on the advice of these elders. But unfortunately times have changed. In this day and age the majority of elders do not seek nor act on beneficial knowledge instead the vast majority act on their cultural practices which in most cases do not have a foundation in Islamic teachings. They flee from beneficial knowledge and are very content with these teachings based on made up cultural practices. Because of this ignorance elders are now sometimes right and sometimes wrong. Therefore, the statement elders know best no longer applies.

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

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

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

“And they have thereof no knowledge. They follow not except assumption, and indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all.”

One must practically prepare for the Day of Judgement by using their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which has been explained in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not make assumptions about their salvation on the Day of Judgement as their assumptions will not save them.

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

So if a Muslim desires all their worldly possessions to become a blessing for them in both worlds all they have to do is use them correctly according to the teachings found in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they use them incorrectly then the same blessing will become a burden and curse for them in both worlds. It is as simple as that.

“And they have thereof no knowledge. They follow not except assumption, and indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all.”

One must practically prepare for the Day of Judgement by using their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which has been explained in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not make assumptions about their salvation on the Day of Judgement as their assumptions will not save 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.

“And they have thereof no knowledge. They follow not except assumption, and indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all.”

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 53 – An Najm, Verses 29-30

فَاعْرِضْ عَنْ مَن تَوَلَّىٰ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا



ذَٰلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُم مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن ضَلَّ عَن
سَبِيلِهِ ۖ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن أَهْتَدَىٰ



“So turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life.

That is their sum of knowledge. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who strays from His way, and He is most knowing of who is guided.”

“So turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message...”

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 away from whoever turns his back on Our message...”

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 away from whoever turns his back on Our message...”

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 turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life.”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow 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.

“So turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life.”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves 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.

“So turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life.”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow 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.

“So turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. That is their sum of knowledge...”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow the two sources of guidance. Ignorance can lead to 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.

“So turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. That is their sum of knowledge...”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow the two sources of guidance. Ignorance can lead to this outcome. 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.

“So turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. That is their sum of knowledge...”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow the two sources of guidance.

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 turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. That is their sum of knowledge...”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow 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.

“So turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. That is their sum of knowledge...”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow 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.

“So turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. That is their sum of knowledge...”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one’s back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow the two sources of guidance. Failing to adopt the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter can lead to this outcome.

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 turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. That is their sum of knowledge...”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow the two sources of guidance. Failing to adopt the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter can lead to this outcome.

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 turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. That is their sum of knowledge...”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow the two sources of guidance. Failing to adopt the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter can lead to this outcome.

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 turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. That is their sum of knowledge...”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow the two sources of guidance. Failing to adopt the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter can lead to this outcome.

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 turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. That is their sum of knowledge...”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow the two sources of guidance. Failing to adopt the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter can lead to this outcome.

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 turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. That is their sum of knowledge...”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow the two sources of guidance. Failing to adopt the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter can lead to this outcome.

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 turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. That is their sum of knowledge...”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow the two sources of guidance. Failing to adopt the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter can lead to this outcome.

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 turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. That is their sum of knowledge...”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow the two sources of guidance. Failing to adopt the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter can lead to this outcome.

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 turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. That is their sum of knowledge...”

It is important to note that this verse does not state they disbelieved in the message.

Turning one's back on the divine message involves failing to sincerely obey and follow the two sources of guidance.

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.

***“...Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who strays from His way,
and He is most knowing of who is guided.”***

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, your Lord is most knowing of who strays from His way,
and He is most knowing of who is guided.”***

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 53 – An Najm, Verses 31-32

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا
بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا بِالْحُسْنَى ﴿٣١﴾

الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنشَأَكُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ
أَنْتُمْ أَجِنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ فَلَا تُزَكُّوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ
بِمَنِ اتَّقَى ﴿٣٢﴾

“And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth - that He may recompense those who do evil with [the penalty of] what they have done and recompense those who do good with the best [reward].

Those who avoid the major sins and immoralities, only [committing] slight ones. Indeed, your Lord is vast in forgiveness. He was most knowing of you when He produced you from the earth and when you were fetuses in the wombs of your mothers. So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him.”

“And to Allah 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.”

“...that He may recompense those who do evil with [the penalty of] what they have done and recompense those who do good with the best [reward].”

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.

“...that He may recompense those who do evil with [the penalty of] what they have done and recompense those who do good with the best [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.

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.

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.

“...that He may recompense those who do evil with [the penalty of] what they have done and recompense those who do good with the best [reward].”

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 He may recompense those who do evil with [the penalty of] what they have done and recompense those who do good with the best [reward].”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly they must also treat others with good character otherwise they will not succeed as the only truly successful people are the believers.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another

Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be rewarded like the muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

“...that He may recompense those who do evil with [the penalty of] what they have done and recompense those who do good with the best [reward].”

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.

“...that He may recompense those who do evil with [the penalty of] what they have done and recompense those who do good with the best [reward].”

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.

“...that He may recompense those who do evil with [the penalty of] what they have done and recompense those who do good with the best [reward].”

Doing good involves obtaining excellence of faith.

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.

“...that He may recompense those who do evil with [the penalty of] what they have done and recompense those who do good with the best [reward].”

One can pass this test when they 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.

“...that He may recompense those who do evil with [the penalty of] what they have done and recompense those who do good with the best [reward].”

One can pass this test when they use 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.

“...that He may recompense those who do evil with [the penalty of] what they have done and recompense those who do good with the best [reward].”

One can pass this test when they 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.

“...and recompense those who do good with the best [reward]. Those who avoid the major sins and immoralities, only [committing] slight ones. Indeed, your Lord is vast in forgiveness...”

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.

“...and recompense those who do good with the best [reward]. Those who avoid the major sins and immoralities, only [committing] slight ones. Indeed, your Lord is vast in forgiveness...”

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 recompense those who do good with the best [reward]. Those who avoid the major sins and immoralities, only [committing] slight ones. Indeed, your Lord is vast in 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.”

“...He was most knowing of you when He produced you from the earth...”

Remembering the origins of mankind prevents 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.

“...He was most knowing of you when He produced you from the earth and when you were fetuses in the wombs of your mothers...”

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 was most knowing of you when He produced you from the earth and when you were fetuses in the wombs of your mothers...”

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.”

“...So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him.”

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.

“...So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him.”

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.

“...So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him.”

This verse indicates the standard of goodness in the eyes of Allah, the Exalted.

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.

“...So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2662, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against over praising others.

This is a disliked deed as it firstly can be sinful if the praise is based on falsehood. Even if it is true over praising people especially, the ignorant can cause them to become proud. This is an evil characteristic as an atom's worth of it is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Over praising can even cause the praised person to believe they have fulfilled their potential in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and therefore do not need to strive harder in His obedience.

A muslim should not be fooled by the praise of others as they know their actions and inner hidden character better than any other person. Reflecting on this and the countless times Allah, the Exalted, has concealed their faults from people should prevent them from becoming proud. In addition, they should remember that the praised quality they possess was granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, therefore all praise belongs to Him. Finally, a muslim should become more grateful to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they possess in ways pleasing to Him. They should instead advise others about this Hadith and warn them not to over praise others.

Only in certain cases is praising others acceptable and must include not over praising them, sticking with the truth and it should be done in order to encourage them to do more good. This especially applies to children such as, praising them in respect to their school work, good behaviour and fulfilling the duties of Islam.

“...So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him.”

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.

Chapter 53 – An Najm, Verses 33-42

أَفْرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي تَوَلَّى



وَأَعْطَى قَلِيلًا وَأَكْدَى



أَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ فَهُوَ يَرَى



أَمْ لَمْ يُنَبِّأْ بِمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَى



وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى



أَلَّا نَزَرَ وَاذْرَهُ وَزَرَ أُخْرَى



وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى ﴿٣٩﴾

وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَى ﴿٤٠﴾

ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ الْجَزَاءَ الْأَوْفَى ﴿٤١﴾

وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنتَهَىٰ ﴿٤٢﴾

“Have you seen the one who turned away.

And gave a little and [then] refrained?

Does he have knowledge of the unseen, so he sees?

Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses.

And [of] Abraham, who fulfilled [his pledge].

That no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another.

And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives.

And that his effort is going to be seen.

Then he will be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense.

And that to your Lord is the finality.”

“Have you seen the one who turned away.”

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 the one who turned away.”

This contradicts 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.

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained?”

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.

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained?”

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]...”

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained?”

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.

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained? Does he have knowledge of the unseen, so he sees?”

One should not fear that their allocated provision will run out if they use their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that charity does not decrease one's wealth.

This is because whatever a muslim spends for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to any blessing, such as time, Allah, the Exalted, will compensate them. This compensation will be much more than what they originally used. 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?...”

For example, Allah, the Exalted, may grant the one who spends for His sake with financial opportunities which leads to an overall increase in wealth. In addition, this could be referring to the reality that whatever is destined to be spent on a person, which is their true wealth, can never

change irrespective of their behaviour or the behaviour of the entire creation. In fact, a person's provision was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. So in reality, one's charity will not change the amount of wealth which is destined to be spent on them, such as wealth spent on their food.

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained? Does he have knowledge of the unseen, so he sees?”

One should not fear that their allocated provision will run out if they use their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Behaving in this manner is showing gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, and this only leads to an increase in blessings and mercy.

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.

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained?...Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses. And [of] Abraham...That no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another.”

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?

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained?...Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses. And [of] Abraham...That no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another.”

Even though a person will not be able to unload their sins onto another unjustly on the Day of Judgement, one can increase their own sins when they guide others to commit sins even if they do not commit the sins themselves.

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.

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained?...Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses. And [of] Abraham...And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives. And that his effort is going to be seen.”

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.

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained?...Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses. And [of] Abraham...And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives. And that his effort is going to be seen.”

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.

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained?...Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses. And [of] Abraham...And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives. And that his effort is going to be seen.”

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.

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained?...Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses. And [of] Abraham...And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives. And that his effort is going to be seen.”

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.

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained?...Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses. And [of] Abraham...And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives. And that his effort is going to be seen.”

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.

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained?...Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses. And [of] Abraham...And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives. And that his effort is going to be seen.”

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.

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained?...Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses. And [of] Abraham...And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives. And that his effort is going to be seen.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6464, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that deeds should be done correctly, sincerely and moderately. Muslims should ensure that they perform deeds correctly meaning, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as performing deeds without this guidance will lead one away from the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. 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...”

Next, they must perform them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and not for any other reason, such as showing off. These people 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.

Muslims should perform voluntary righteous deeds moderately without overburdening themselves as this often leads to one giving up. Instead, they should act according to their capacity and means regularly even if these actions are little in size and number as this is far superior to big actions which are performed once in a while.

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained?...Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses. And [of] Abraham...And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives. And that his effort is going to be seen.”

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.

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained?...Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses. And [of] Abraham...And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives. And that his effort is going to be seen. Then he will be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense. And that to your Lord is the finality.”

One must strive for their final judgement by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain peace and success in both worlds.

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One must strive for their final judgement by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain peace and success in both worlds.

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.

“Have you seen the one who turned away. And gave a little and [then] refrained?...Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses. And [of] Abraham...And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives. And that his effort is going to be seen. Then he will be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense. And that to your Lord is the finality.”

One must strive for their final judgement by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain 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.

***“Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses.
And [of] Abraham...”***

These verses encourages one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge as it leads to certainty of faith.

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]...”

***“Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses.
And [of] Abraham...”***

These verses encourages one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge as it 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 [of] Abraham, who fulfilled [his obligations].”

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 [of] Abraham, who fulfilled [his obligations].”

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?

“And [of] Abraham, who fulfilled [his obligations].”

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 [of] Abraham, who fulfilled [his obligations].”

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.

“And that his effort is going to be seen.”

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.

Chapter 53 – An Najm, Verse 43

وَإِنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْحَكَكَ وَأَبْكِي

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh...”

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 that it is He who makes [one]...weep.”

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

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

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

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

A patient muslim understands that anything which effected them, such as a difficulty, could not have been avoided even if the entire creation aided them. Similarly, whatever missed them could not have affected them. The one who truly accepts this fact will not exult and grow proud over anything

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

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

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

The one who is content does not desire things to change as they know the choice of Allah, the Exalted, is better than their choice. This muslim firmly believes and acts on the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. It advises that every situation is best for the believer. If they encounter a

problem they should show patience which leads to blessings. And if they experience times of ease they should show gratitude which also leads to blessings.

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

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

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

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

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 that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

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.

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

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 that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

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 that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

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 that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

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 that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

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 that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

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.

Chapter 53 – An Najm, Verse 44

﴿٤٤﴾ وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَمَاتَ وَأَحْيَا

“And that it is He who causes death and gives life.”

“And that it is He who 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.

“And that it is He who 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?”

“And that it is He who causes 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.

“And that it is He who 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.

“And that it is He who causes death and gives life.”

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 that it is He who causes death and gives life.”

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 that it is He who causes death and gives life.”

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 53 – An Najm, Verses 45-47

وَإِنَّهُ خَلَقَ الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ ﴿٤٥﴾

مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ إِذَا تُمْنَىٰ ﴿٤٦﴾

وَأَنَّ عَلَيْهِ النَّشْأَةَ الْآخِرَىٰ ﴿٤٧﴾

“And that He creates the two mates - the male and female.

From a sperm-drop when it is emitted.

And that [incumbent] upon Him is the other [i.e., next] creation.”

“And that He creates the two mates - the 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.”

“And that He creates the two mates - the male and female. From a sperm-drop when it is emitted.”

Remembering the origins of mankind prevents 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.

“And that He creates the two mates - the male and female. From a sperm-drop when it is emitted. And that [incumbent] upon Him is the other [i.e. next] 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 53 – An Najm, Verse 48

٤٨ وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَغْنَىٰ وَأَقْنَىٰ

“And that it is He who enriches and suffices.”

“And that it is He who enriches and suffices.”

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 that it is He who enriches and suffices.”

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 that it is He who enriches and suffices.”

The one who uses their blessings correctly meaning, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, will be enriched further.

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 that it is He who enriches and suffices.”

True enrichment is richness of the soul meaning, contentment. Worldly blessings, such as wealth, mean very little without this type of enrichment.

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 that it is He who enriches and suffices.”

True enrichment is richness of the soul meaning, contentment. Worldly blessings, such as wealth, mean very little without this type of enrichment.

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 that it is He who enriches and suffices.”

True enrichment is richness of the soul meaning, contentment. Worldly blessings, such as wealth, mean very little without this type of enrichment.

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.

“And that it is He who enriches and suffices.”

True enrichment is richness of the soul meaning, contentment. Worldly blessings, such as wealth, mean very little without this type of enrichment.

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 53 – An Najm, Verse 49

﴿٤٩﴾ وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشَّعَرَىٰ

“And that it is He who is the Lord of Sirius.”

“And that it is He who is the Lord of Sirius [a star].”

This is a Star which was worshipped by some Arabs.

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 decide 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. Whereas, accepting the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, would mean that a person must believe in their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This would force them to lead their life according to the code of conduct of Islam instead of following their own desires. It is this fact that makes people averse towards the Oneness of 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 that it is He who is the Lord of Sirius [a star].”

This is a Star which was worshipped by some Arabs.

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 decide 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. Whereas, accepting the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, would mean that a person must believe in their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This would force them to lead their life according to the code of conduct of Islam instead of following their own desires. It is this fact that makes people averse towards the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, another major cause of this outcome 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.

“And that it is He who is the Lord of Sirius [a star].”

This is a Star which was worshipped by some Arabs.

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 decide 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. Whereas, accepting the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, would mean that a person must believe in their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This would force them to lead their life according to the code of conduct of Islam instead of following their own desires. It is this fact that makes people averse towards the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, another major cause of this outcome 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 that it is He who is the Lord of Sirius.”

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.""

Chapter 53 – An Najm, Verses 50-54

وَأَنَّهُ أَهْلَكَ عَادًا الْأُولَىٰ ﴿٥٠﴾

وَتَمُودًا فَمَا أَبْقَىٰ ﴿٥١﴾

وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ مِّن قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا هُمْ أَظْلَمَ وَأَطْغَىٰ ﴿٥٢﴾

وَالْمُؤَنَّفِكَ أَهْوَىٰ ﴿٥٣﴾

فَغَشَّاهَا مَا عَشَّىٰ ﴿٥٤﴾

“And that He destroyed the first [people of] ‘Aad.

And Thamūd - and He did not spare [them].

And the people of Noah before. Indeed, it was they who were [even] more unjust and oppressing.

And the overturned towns He hurled down.

And covered them by [punishment] that which He covered.”

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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.

“And that He destroyed the first [people of] ‘Aad. And Thamūd - and He did not spare [them]. And the people of Noah before. Indeed, it was they who were [even] more unjust and oppressing. And the overturned towns He hurled down. And covered them by [punishment] that which He covered.”

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 destroyed the first [people of] ‘Aad. And Thamūd - and He did not spare [them]. And the people of Noah before. Indeed, it was they who were [even] more unjust and oppressing. And the overturned towns He hurled down. And covered them by [punishment] that which He covered.”

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 that He destroyed the first [people of] ‘Aad. And Thamūd - and He did not spare [them]. And the people of Noah before. Indeed, it was they who were [even] more unjust and oppressing. And the overturned towns He hurled down. And covered them by [punishment] that which He covered.”

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 53 – An Najm, Verse 55

 فَبِأَيِّ ءَالَآءِ رَبِّكَ نَتَمَارَىٰ

“Then which of the favors of your Lord do you doubt?”

“Then which of the favors of your Lord do you doubt?”

Ignorance can prevent one from recognising the origins of all blessings.

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 which of the favors of your Lord do you doubt?”

The word favours includes the signs of Allah, the Exalted. Weakness of faith prevents one from being positively affected by the signs of Allah, the Exalted.

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.

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The word favours includes the signs of Allah, the Exalted.

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.

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*"...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 which of the favors of your Lord do you doubt?”

The word favours includes the signs of Allah, the Exalted.

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 which of the favors of your Lord do you doubt?”

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.”

“Then which of the favors of your Lord do you doubt?”

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.

Chapter 53 – An Najm, Verse 56

هَذَا نَذِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّذِرِ الْأُولَىٰ



“This is a warner from [i.e., like] the former warners.”

“This [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] is a warner from [i.e., like] the former warners.”

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.

“This [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] is a warner from [i.e., like] the former warners.”

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.

“This [Holy Quran] is a warner from [i.e., like] the former [divine scriptures] warners.”

One will only benefit from the warnings 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.

Chapter 53 – An Najm, Verses 57-62 of 62

أَزِفَتِ الْأَزِفَةُ ﴿٥٧﴾

لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَاشِفَةٌ ﴿٥٨﴾

أَفَمَنْ هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ تَعَجِبُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

وَتَضْحَكُونَ وَلَا تَبْكُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

وَأَنْتُمْ سَمِيدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

فَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ  وَأَعْبُدُوا 

“The Approaching Day has approached.

Of it, [from those] besides Allah, there is no remover.

Then at this statement do you wonder?

And you laugh and do not weep?

While you are proudly sporting [heedlessly]?

So prostrate to Allah and worship [Him].”

“The Approaching Day has approached.”

Even if some believe the Day of Judgement is far, one’s death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their judgement begins as they can no longer perform 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.

“The Approaching Day has approached.”

Even if some believe the Day of Judgement is far, one’s death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their judgement begins as they can no longer perform 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?”

“The Approaching Day has approached.”

Even if some believe the Day of Judgement is far, one’s death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their judgement begins as they can no longer perform 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.

“The Approaching Day has approached.”

Even if some believe the Day of Judgement is far, one’s death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their judgement begins as they can no longer perform 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.

“The Approaching Day has approached. Of it, [from those] besides Allāh, there is no remover.”

The approaching day can also be referring to divine punishment in this world.

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 Approaching Day has approached. Of it, [from those] besides Allāh, there is no remover.”

The approaching day can also be referring to divine punishment in this world.

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 Approaching Day has approached. Of it, [from those] besides Allāh, there is no remover.”

The approaching day can also be referring to divine punishment in this world.

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.”

“The Approaching Day has approached. Of it, [from those] besides Allāh, there is no remover.”

The approaching day can also be referring to divine punishment in this world.

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.

“The Approaching Day has approached. Of it, [from those] besides Allāh, there is no remover. Then at this statement do you wonder? And you laugh and do not weep. While you are proudly sporting [heedlessly]? So prostrate to Allāh and worship [Him].”

These verses warn that a person must avoid heedlessness by practically preparing for the Day of Judgement before their time runs out. As indicated by the last verse, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as this is true worship of 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.

“The Approaching Day has approached. Of it, [from those] besides Allāh, there is no remover. Then at this statement do you wonder? And you laugh and do not weep. While you are proudly sporting [heedlessly]? So prostrate to Allāh and worship [Him].”

One adopts a laid-back attitude towards the Day of Judgement when they adopt 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.”

“The Approaching Day has approached. Of it, [from those] besides Allāh, there is no remover. Then at this statement do you wonder? And you laugh and do not weep. While you are proudly sporting [heedlessly]? So prostrate to Allāh and worship [Him].”

These verses warn that a person must avoid heedlessness by practically preparing for the Day of Judgement before their time runs out. As indicated by the last verse, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as this is true worship of Him.

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.

“The Approaching Day has approached. Of it, [from those] besides Allāh, there is no remover. Then at this statement do you wonder? And you laugh and do not weep. While you are proudly sporting [heedlessly]? So prostrate to Allāh and worship [Him].”

These verses warn that a person must avoid heedlessness by practically preparing for the Day of Judgement before their time runs out. As indicated by the last verse, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as this is true worship of Him.

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.

“The Approaching Day has approached. Of it, [from those] besides Allāh, there is no remover. Then at this statement do you wonder? And you laugh and do not weep. While you are proudly sporting [heedlessly]? So prostrate to Allāh and worship [Him].”

These verses warn that a person must avoid heedlessness by practically preparing for the Day of Judgement before their time runs out. As indicated by the last verse, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as this is true worship of Him.

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.

“The Approaching Day has approached. Of it, [from those] besides Allāh, there is no remover. Then at this statement do you wonder? And you laugh and do not weep. While you are proudly sporting [heedlessly]? So prostrate to Allāh and worship [Him].”

These verses warn that a person must avoid heedlessness by practically preparing for the Day of Judgement before their time runs out. As indicated by the last verse, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as this is true worship of 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.

“The Approaching Day has approached. Of it, [from those] besides Allāh, there is no remover. Then at this statement do you wonder? And you laugh and do not weep. While you are proudly sporting [heedlessly]? So prostrate to Allāh and worship [Him].”

These verses warn that a person must avoid heedlessness by practically preparing for the Day of Judgement before their time runs out. As indicated by the last verse, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as this is true worship of 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.

“The Approaching Day has approached. Of it, [from those] besides Allāh, there is no remover. Then at this statement do you wonder? And you laugh and do not weep. While you are proudly sporting [heedlessly]? So prostrate to Allāh and worship [Him].”

These verses warn that a person must avoid heedlessness by practically preparing for the Day of Judgement before their time runs out. As indicated by the last verse, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as this is true worship of 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.

“Then at this statement do you wonder? And you laugh and do not weep. While you are proudly sporting [heedlessly]? So prostrate to Allāh and worship [Him].”

These verses could also be referring to one’s laid-back attitude towards the Holy Quran. True worship of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to the Holy Quran 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.

“Then at this statement do you wonder? And you laugh and do not weep. While you are proudly sporting [heedlessly]? So prostrate to Allāh and worship [Him].”

These verses could also be referring to one’s laid-back attitude towards the Holy Quran. True worship of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to the Holy Quran involves understanding its miraculous nature.

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.”

“While you are proudly sporting [heedlessly]?”

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.

“So prostrate to Allāh and worship [Him].”

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.

“So prostrate to Allāh and worship [Him].”

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.

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 54 – Al Qamar, Verses 1-3

أَقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَأَنْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ ﴿١﴾

وَإِنْ يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ ﴿٢﴾

وَكَذَّبُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ مُّسْتَقَرٌّ ﴿٣﴾

“The Hour has come near, and the moon has split [in two].

And if they see a sign [i.e., miracle], they turn away and say, "Passing magic."

And they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a [time of] settlement.”

“The Hour has come near...”

Even if some believe the Day of Judgement is far, one’s death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their judgement begins as they can no longer perform 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.

“The Hour has come near...”

Even if some believe the Day of Judgement is far, one’s death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their judgement begins as they can no longer perform 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?”

“The Hour has come near...”

Even if some believe the Day of Judgement is far, one’s death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their judgement begins as they can no longer perform 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.

“The Hour has come near...”

Even if some believe the Day of Judgement is far, one’s death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their judgement begins as they can no longer perform 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.

“The Hour has come near...”

Even if some believe the Day of Judgement is far, one’s death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their judgement begins as they can no longer perform deeds, such as sincere repentance. One must therefore practically prepare for it 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.

“The Hour has come near...”

Even if some believe the Day of Judgement is far, one’s death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their judgement begins as they can no longer perform deeds, such as sincere repentance. One must therefore practically prepare for it 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 Hour has come near, and the moon has split [in two]. And if they see a sign [i.e., miracle], they turn away and say, "Passing magic." And they denied and followed their inclinations...”

The non-Muslims of Mecca desired the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to show them a miracle, other than the Holy Quran, in order to confirm his declaration. He showed them the splitting of the Moon. Even after this obvious sign they simply claimed he tricked their eyes. During this time chapter 54 Al Qamar, verses 1-3, were revealed:

“The Hour has come near, and the moon has split [in two]. And if they see a sign [i.e., miracle], they turn away and say, "Passing magic." And they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a [time of] settlement.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 77-78. And a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3637, also discusses this event.

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 they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a [time of] settlement.”

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 they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a [time of] settlement.”

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 they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a [time of] settlement.”

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 they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a [time of] settlement.”

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 they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a [time of] settlement.”

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 they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a [time of] settlement.”

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 they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a [time of] settlement.”

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 they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a [time of] settlement.”

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 they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a [time of] settlement.”

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 for every matter is a [time of] settlement.”

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.”

Chapter 54 – Al Qamar, Verses 4-5

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَنْبَاءِ مَا فِيهِ مُزْدَجَرٌ ﴿٤﴾

حِكْمَةٌ بَالِغَةٌ فَمَا تُغْنِ الْأُنذُرُ ﴿٥﴾

“And there has already come to them of information that in which there is deterrence [from disobedience].

Extensive wisdom - but warning does not avail [them].”

“And there has already come to them of information that in which there is deterrence [from disobedience]...but warning does not avail [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 there has already come to them of information that in which there is deterrence [from disobedience]...but warning does not avail [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.

“And there has already come to them of information that in which there is deterrence [from disobedience]...but warning does not avail [them].”

Ignorance can prevent 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.

“And there has already come to them of information that in which there is deterrence [from disobedience]...but warning does not avail [them].”

Ignorance can prevent one from being positively affected by 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 there has already come to them of information that in which there is deterrence [from disobedience]. Extensive wisdom - but warning does not avail [them].”

One will only benefit from the wisdom of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they sincerely obey and follow 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 there has already come to them of information that in which there is deterrence [from disobedience]. Extensive wisdom - but warning does not avail [them].”

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 mentioned in the verses under discussion.

“And there has already come to them of information that in which there is deterrence [from disobedience]. Extensive wisdom - but warning does not avail [them].”

These verses indicate 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 54 – Al Qamar, Verses 6-8

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعِ إِلَىٰ شَيْءٍ نُّكْرٍ ﴿٦﴾

خُشَعًا أَبْصَرُهُمْ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ كَأَنَّهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُنْتَشِرٌ

﴿٧﴾

مُهْطِعِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ يَقُولُ الْكٰفِرُونَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِرٌ ﴿٨﴾

*“So leave them, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him].
On the Day the Summoner will summon them to a horrific event.*

*Their eyes humbled, they will emerge from the graves as if they were
locusts spreading.*

*Racing ahead toward the Caller. The disbelievers will say, "This is a difficult
Day."*

“So leave them, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...”

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, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...”

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 leave them, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...”

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.

“So leave them, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...”

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, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...”

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.

“...On the Day the Summoner will summon them to a horrific event. Their eyes humbled, they will emerge from the graves as if they were locusts spreading. Racing ahead toward the Caller. The disbelievers will say, "This is a difficult 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.

“...On the Day the Summoner will summon them to a horrific event. Their eyes humbled, they will emerge from the graves as if they were locusts spreading. Racing ahead toward the Caller. The disbelievers will say, "This is a difficult 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.

“...On the Day the Summoner will summon them to a horrific event. Their eyes humbled, they will emerge from the graves as if they were locusts spreading. Racing ahead toward the Caller. The disbelievers will say, "This is a difficult 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.

“...On the Day the Summoner will summon them to a horrific event. Their eyes humbled, they will emerge from the graves as if they were locusts spreading. Racing ahead toward the Caller. The disbelievers will say, "This is a difficult 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.

“...On the Day the Summoner will summon them to a horrific event. Their eyes humbled, they will emerge from the graves as if they were locusts spreading. Racing ahead toward the Caller. The disbelievers will say, "This is a difficult Day.””

The one who adopts pride in this world will be humbled and humiliated in the hereafter.

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.

“...On the Day the Summoner will summon them to a horrific event. Their eyes humbled, they will emerge from the graves as if they were locusts spreading. Racing ahead toward the Caller. The disbelievers will say, "This is a difficult Day.””

One must avoid this outcome by practically preparing 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.

“...On the Day the Summoner will summon them to a horrific event. Their eyes humbled, they will emerge from the graves as if they were locusts spreading. Racing ahead toward the Caller. The disbelievers will say, "This is a difficult Day."”

One must avoid this outcome by practically preparing 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.

Chapter 54 – Al Qamar, Verses 9-16

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ فَكَذَّبُوا عَبْدَنَا وَقَالُوا مَجْنُونٌ
وَأَزْدُجِرَ ٩

فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَغْلُوبٌ فَأَنْتَصِرْ ١٠

فَفَتَحْنَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَاءٍ مُنْهَمِرٍ ١١

وَفَجَّرْنَا الْأَرْضَ عُيُونًا فَالْتَقَى الْمَاءُ عَلَى أَمْرٍ قَدْ قُدِرَ ١٢

وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَى ذَاتِ الْوَجْهِ وَدُسِرَ ١٣

تَجَرَّى بِأَعْيُنِنَا جَزَاءً لِمَنْ كَانَ كُفِرَ ١٤

وَلَقَدْ تَرَكْنَهَا آيَةً فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدْرِكٍ ١٥

فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرٍ ١٦

"The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled.

So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help."

Then We opened the gates of the heaven with rain pouring down.

And caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already predestined.

And We carried him on a [construction of] planks and nails.

Sailing under Our observation as reward for he who had been denied.

And We left it as a sign, so is there any who will remember?

And how [severe] were My punishment and warning."

“The people of Noah denied before them...”

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.

“The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant...”

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 Nuh, 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.”

“The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, “A madman,” and he was repelled.”

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.

“The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, “A madman,” and he was repelled.”

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.

“The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled. So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help."”

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.

“The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled. So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help."”

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.

“The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled. So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help."”

A Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, advises that the one who remembers Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience in times of ease will receive His support and aid in times of difficulty. This response is indicated in the divine Hadith discussed earlier which is found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 6502. It advises that when one continues to obey Allah, the Exalted, He in turn empowers their body to only obey Him. A part of this empowerment is being provided with patience and support when one faces hardship.

Acting on this advice encourages a muslim to adopt trust in Allah, the Exalted. They will trust Allah, the Exalted, will give them support, relief from all difficulties and even respond to their supplications. This trust helps one to rely on the decree of Allah, the Exalted, instead of their efforts and planning. They will truly believe Allah, the Exalted, only decrees the best for them and will grant them a way out from all difficulties. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out”

To obtain this response from Allah, the Exalted, one must remember Him through sincere obedience in times of ease by fulfilling His commands and refraining from His prohibitions. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3382, that if one desires the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their time of difficulty and grief they should consistently supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, in times of ease. The Holy Quran indicates this truth in chapter 37 As Saffat, verses 143 and 144:

“And had he not been of those who exalt Allah. He would have remained inside its belly until the Day they are resurrected.”

This is when Allah, the Exalted, rescued the Holy Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him, after he was swallowed by a whale. His prior obedience led to Allah, the Exalted, granting him safety and a way out of his difficulty.

Conversely, remaining heedless to the remembrance and obedience of Allah, the Exalted, during times of ease and only remembering Him in times of difficulty has little or no positive effect. For example, Pharaoh submitting to Allah, the Exalted, while he was in the throes of death after leading a rebellious life did not benefit him. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 91:

“Now? And you had disobeyed [Him] before and were of the corrupters?”

The greatest difficulty one will face in this world is death. So it is hoped that the one who remembers and sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, in times of ease will be saved by Him at the time of their death so that they leave this world with their faith. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 27:

“Allah keeps firm those who believe, with the firm word, in worldly life and in the Hereafter...”

A muslim should therefore follow the footsteps of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, by remembering and sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in times of ease so that He rescues them in times of difficulty.

“The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled. So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help." Then We opened the gates of the heaven with rain pouring down. And caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already predestined.”

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.

“The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled. So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help." Then We opened the gates of the heaven with rain pouring down. And caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already predestined. And We carried him on a [construction of] planks and nails.”

The final part of these verses indicates both aspects of trusting in Allah, the Exalted. The first is correctly using the means created and provided by Allah, the Exalted. The second is firmly believing the outcome of the situation, which Allah, the Exalted, chooses, is best for all involved.

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 themselves 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.

“The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled. So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help." Then We opened the gates of the heaven with rain pouring down. And caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already predestined. And We carried him on a [construction of] planks and nails.”

The final part of these verses indicates both aspects of trusting in Allah, the Exalted. The first is correctly using the means created and provided by Allah, the Exalted. The second is firmly believing the outcome of the situation, which Allah, the Exalted, chooses, is best for all involved.

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.

“The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled. So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help." Then We opened the gates of the heaven with rain pouring down. And caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already predestined. And We carried him on a [construction of] planks and nails. Sailing under Our observation as reward for he who had been denied.”

This great 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 Nuh, peace be upon him, and his followers. 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.

“The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled. So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help." Then We opened the gates of the heaven with rain pouring down. And caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already predestined. And We carried him on a [construction of] planks and nails. Sailing under Our observation as reward for he who had been denied.”

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.

“The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled. So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help." Then We opened the gates of the heaven with rain pouring down. And caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already predestined. And We carried him on a [construction of] planks and nails. Sailing under Our observation as reward for he who had been denied. And We left it as a sign, so is there any who will remember? And how [severe] were My punishment and warning.”

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, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled. So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help." Then We opened the gates of the heaven with rain pouring down. And caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already predestined. And We carried him on a [construction of] planks and nails. Sailing under Our observation as reward for he who had been denied. And We left it as a sign, so is there any who will remember? And how [severe] were My punishment and warning.”

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.

“The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled. So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help." Then We opened the gates of the heaven with rain pouring down. And caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already predestined. And We carried him on a [construction of] planks and nails. Sailing under Our observation as reward for he who had been denied. And We left it as a sign, so is there any who will remember? And how [severe] were My punishment and warning.”

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, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled. So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help." Then We opened the gates of the heaven with rain pouring down. And caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already predestined. And We carried him on a [construction of] planks and nails. Sailing under Our observation as reward for he who had been denied. And We left it as a sign, so is there any who will remember? And how [severe] were My punishment and warning.”

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, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled. So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help." Then We opened the gates of the heaven with rain pouring down. And caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already predestined. And We carried him on a [construction of] planks and nails. Sailing under Our observation as reward for he who had been denied. And We left it as a sign, so is there any who will remember? And how [severe] were My punishment and warning.”

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.

“The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled. So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help." Then We opened the gates of the heaven with rain pouring down. And caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already predestined. And We carried him on a [construction of] planks and nails. Sailing under Our observation as reward for he who had been denied. And We left it as a sign, so is there any who will remember? And how [severe] were My punishment and warning.”

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by 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.

Chapter 54 – Al Qamar, Verse 17



وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْءَانَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ

“And We have certainly made the Quran easy for remembrance, so is there any who will receive admonishment from it?”

“And We have certainly made the Quran easy for remembrance, so is there any who will receive admonishment from it?”

This will be achieved when one fulfils 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 We have certainly made the Quran easy for remembrance, so is there any who will receive admonishment from 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.

Chapter 54 – Al Qamar, Verses 18-21

كذبت عاد فكيف كان عذابي ونذر 

إنا أرسلنا عليهم ريحا صرصرا في يوم نحس مستمر 

تنزع الناس كأنهم أعجاز نخل منقعر 

فكيف كان عذابي ونذر 

*“Aad denied; and how [severe] were My punishment and warning.
Indeed, We sent upon them a screaming wind on a day of continuous
misfortune.*

Extracting the people as if they were trunks of palm trees uprooted.

And how [severe] were My punishment and warning.”

“Aad denied; and how [severe] were My punishment and warning. Indeed, We sent upon them a screaming wind on a day of continuous misfortune. Extracting the people as if they were trunks of palm trees uprooted. And how [severe] were My punishment and warning.”

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.

“Aad denied; and how [severe] were My punishment and warning. Indeed, We sent upon them a screaming wind on a day of continuous misfortune. Extracting the people as if they were trunks of palm trees uprooted. And how [severe] were My punishment and warning.”

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.

“Aad denied; and how [severe] were My punishment and warning. Indeed, We sent upon them a screaming wind on a day of continuous misfortune. Extracting the people as if they were trunks of palm trees uprooted. And how [severe] were My punishment and warning.”

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.

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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.

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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.

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

Chapter 54 – Al Qamar, Verse 22

﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْءَانَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ

“And We have certainly made the Quran easy for remembrance, so is there any who will receive admonishment from it?”

“And We have certainly made the Quran easy for remembrance, so is there any who will receive admonishment from it?”

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

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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 We have certainly made the Quran easy for remembrance, so is there any who will receive admonishment from 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.

Chapter 54 – Al Qamar, Verses 23-31

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٢٣﴾

فَقَالُوا أَبَشْرًا مِمَّنَّا وَاحِدًا نَتَّبِعُهُ إِنَّآ إِذَا لَفَى ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

أَلُفَى الذِّكْرُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا بَلْ هُوَ كَذَّابٌ أَشْرٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

سَيَعْلَمُونَ غَدًا مِّنَ الْكَذَّابِ الْأَشْرِ ﴿٢٦﴾

إِنَّا مُرْسِلُوا النَّاقَةَ فِئْتَةً لَهُمْ فَارْتَقِبْهُمْ وَاصْطَبِرْ ﴿٢٧﴾

وَنَبِّئْهُمْ أَنَّ الْمَاءَ قِسْمَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ كُلُّ شِرْبٍ مُحْنَضٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

فَنَادَوْا صَاحِبَهُمْ فَتَعَاطَى فَعَقَرَ ﴿٢٩﴾

فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنَذِيرِ ﴿٣٠﴾

﴿٣١﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَكَانُوا كَهَشِيمِ الْمُحْتَظِرِ

“Thamūd denied the warning.

And said, "Is it one human being among us that we should follow? Indeed, we would then be in error and madness.

Has the message been sent down upon him from among us? Rather, he is an insolent liar."

They will know tomorrow who is the insolent liar.

Indeed, We are sending the she-camel as trial for them, so [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] watch them and be patient.

And inform them that the water is shared between them, each [day of] drink attended [by turn].

But they called their companion, and he dared and hamstrung [the camel].

And how [severe] were My punishment and warning.

Indeed, We sent upon them one shriek [i.e., blast from the sky], and they became like the dry twig fragments of an [animal] pen."

“Thamūd denied the warning.”

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.

“Thamūd denied the warning. And said, "Is it one human being among us that we should follow? Indeed, we would then be in error and madness. Has the message been sent down upon him from among us?...”

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.

“Thamūd denied the warning. And said, “Is it one human being among us that we should follow? Indeed, we would then be in error and madness. Has the message been sent down upon him from among us?...””

These verses indicate their 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.

“Thamūd denied the warning. And said, “Is it one human being among us that we should follow? Indeed, we would then be in error and madness. Has the message been sent down upon him from among us?...”

These verses clearly indicate the envy they possessed for the Holy Prophet Salih, peace be upon him.

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.

“Thamūd denied the warning. And said, "Is it one human being among us that we should follow? Indeed, we would then be in error and madness. Has the message been sent down upon him from among us?...”

They judged the Holy Prophet Salih, peace be upon him, according to 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.””

“Thamūd denied the warning. And said, “Is it one human being among us that we should follow? Indeed, we would then be in error and madness. Has the message been sent down upon him from among us? Rather, he is an insolent liar.” They will know tomorrow who is the insolent liar.”

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.

“Thamūd denied the warning. And said, “Is it one human being among us that we should follow? Indeed, we would then be in error and madness. Has the message been sent down upon him from among us? Rather, he is an insolent liar.” They will know tomorrow who is the insolent liar.”

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.

“Thamūd denied the warning. And said, “Is it one human being among us that we should follow? Indeed, we would then be in error and madness. Has the message been sent down upon him from among us? Rather, he is an insolent liar.” They will know tomorrow who is the insolent liar.”

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.”

“Thamūd denied the warning...Indeed, We are sending the she-camel as trial for them, so [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] watch them and be patient.”

The Holy Prophet Salih, peace be upon him, remained patient on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

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.

“Thamūd denied the warning...Indeed, We are sending the she-camel as trial for them, so [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] watch them and be patient. And inform them that the water is shared between them, each [day of] drink attended [by turn]. But they called their companion, and he dared and hamstrung [her].”

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.”

“Thamūd denied the warning...Indeed, We are sending the she-camel as trial for them, so [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] watch them and be patient. And inform them that the water is shared between them, each [day of] drink attended [by turn]. But they called their companion, and he dared and hamstrung [her].”

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.

“Thamūd denied the warning...Indeed, We are sending the she-camel as trial for them, so [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] watch them and be patient. And inform them that the water is shared between them, each [day of] drink attended [by turn]. But they called their companion, and he dared and hamstrung [her]. And how [severe] were My punishment and warning. Indeed, We sent upon them one shriek [i.e., blast from the sky], and they became like the dry twig fragments of an [animal] pen.”

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.

“Thamūd denied the warning...Indeed, We are sending the she-camel as trial for them, so [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] watch them and be patient. And inform them that the water is shared between them, each [day of] drink attended [by turn]. But they called their companion, and he dared and hamstrung [her]. And how [severe] were My punishment and warning. Indeed, We sent upon them one shriek [i.e., blast from the sky], and they became like the dry twig fragments of an [animal] pen.”

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.

“Thamūd denied the warning...Indeed, We are sending the she-camel as trial for them, so [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] watch them and be patient. And inform them that the water is shared between them, each [day of] drink attended [by turn]. But they called their companion, and he dared and hamstrung [her]. And how [severe] were My punishment and warning. Indeed, We sent upon them one shriek [i.e., blast from the sky], and they became like the dry twig fragments of an [animal] pen.”

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.

“Thamūd denied the warning...Indeed, We are sending the she-camel as trial for them, so [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] watch them and be patient. And inform them that the water is shared between them, each [day of] drink attended [by turn]. But they called their companion, and he dared and hamstrung [her]. And how [severe] were My punishment and warning. Indeed, We sent upon them one shriek [i.e., blast from the sky], and they became like the dry twig fragments of an [animal] pen.”

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 54 – Al Qamar, Verse 32

﴿ ٣٢ ﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْءَانَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ

“And We have certainly made the Quran easy for remembrance, so is there any who will receive admonishment from it?”

“And We have certainly made the Quran easy for remembrance, so is there any who will receive admonishment from it?”

This will be achieved when one fulfils 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 We have certainly made the Quran easy for remembrance, so is there any who will receive admonishment from 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.

Chapter 54 – Al Qamar, Verses 33-39

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ بِالَّذُرِّ ﴿٣٣﴾

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حَاصِبًا إِلَّا آءَالَ لُوطٍ نَجَّيْنَاهُمْ بِسِحْرِ ﴿٣٤﴾

نِعْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي مَنْ شَكَرَ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَلَقَدْ أَنْذَرَهُمْ بَطْشَتَنَا فَتَمَارَوْا بِالَّذُرِّ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدُوهُ عَن ضَيْفِهِ فَطَمَسْنَا أَعْيُنَهُمْ فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي ﴿٣٧﴾
وَنذُرٍ

وَلَقَدْ صَبَّحَهُم بُكْرَةً عَذَابٌ مُّسْتَقِرٌّ ﴿٣٨﴾

فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنَذِيرِ



“The people of Lot denied the warning.

*Indeed, We sent upon them a storm of stones, except the family of Lot -
We saved them before dawn.*

As favor from Us. Thus do We reward he who is grateful.

*And he had already warned them of Our assault, but they disputed the
warning.*

*And they had demanded from him his guests, but We obliterated their eyes,
[saying], "Taste My punishment and warning."*

And there came upon them by morning an abiding punishment.

So taste My punishment and warning.”

“The people of Lot denied the warning.”

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.

“The people of Lot denied the warning. Indeed, We sent upon them a storm of stones, except the family of Lot - We saved them before dawn. As favor from Us. Thus do We reward he who is grateful.”

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 Lut, peace be upon him, and his followers. 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.

“The people of Lot denied the warning. Indeed, We sent upon them a storm of stones, except the family of Lot - We saved them before dawn. As favor from Us. Thus do We reward he who is grateful.”

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.

“The people of Lot denied the warning. Indeed, We sent upon them a storm of stones...And he [Prophet Lut, peace be upon him] had already warned them of Our assault, but they disputed the warning. And they had demanded from him his guests...”

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.

“The people of Lot denied the warning. Indeed, We sent upon them a storm of stones...And he [Prophet Lut, peace be upon him] had already warned them of Our assault, but they disputed the warning. And they had demanded from him his guests, but We obliterated their eyes...”

The last part of these verses could also mean that their spiritual eyes were sealed so that they could no longer observe and follow right guidance because of their persistent disobedience.

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.

“The people of Lot denied the warning. Indeed, We sent upon them a storm of stones...And he [Prophet Lut, peace be upon him] had already warned them of Our assault, but they disputed the warning. And they had demanded from him his guests, but We obliterated their eyes, [saying], "Taste My punishment and warning." And there came upon them by morning an abiding punishment. So taste My punishment and warning.”

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 Lot denied the warning. Indeed, We sent upon them a storm of stones...And he [Prophet Lut, peace be upon him] had already warned them of Our assault, but they disputed the warning. And they had demanded from him his guests, but We obliterated their eyes, [saying], "Taste My punishment and warning." And there came upon them by morning an abiding punishment. So taste My punishment and warning.”

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 Lot denied the warning. Indeed, We sent upon them a storm of stones...And he [Prophet Lut, peace be upon him] had already warned them of Our assault, but they disputed the warning. And they had demanded from him his guests, but We obliterated their eyes, [saying], "Taste My punishment and warning." And there came upon them by morning an abiding punishment. So taste My punishment and warning.”

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.

“The people of Lot denied the warning. Indeed, We sent upon them a storm of stones...And he [Prophet Lut, peace be upon him] had already warned them of Our assault, but they disputed the warning. And they had demanded from him his guests, but We obliterated their eyes, [saying], "Taste My punishment and warning." And there came upon them by morning an abiding punishment. So taste My punishment and warning.”

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 54 – Al Qamar, Verse 40



وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْءَانَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ

“And We have certainly made the Quran easy for remembrance, so is there any who will receive admonishment from it?”

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This will be achieved when one fulfils 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 We have certainly made the Quran easy for remembrance, so is there any who will receive admonishment from 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.

Chapter 54 – Al Qamar, Verses 41-42

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَ ءَالَ فِرْعَوْنَ النُّذُرُ ﴿٤١﴾

كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كُلِّهَا فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ أَخْذَ عَزِيزٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ﴿٤٢﴾

“And there certainly came to the people of Pharaoh warning.

They denied Our signs, all of them, so We seized them with a seizure of one Exalted in Might and Perfect in Ability.”

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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.

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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.

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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 there certainly came to the people of Pharaoh warning. They denied Our signs, all of them, so We seized them with a seizure of one Exalted in Might and Perfect in Ability.”

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.

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“And there certainly came to the people of Pharaoh warning. They denied Our signs, all of them, so We seized them with a seizure of one Exalted in Might and Perfect in Ability.”

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“...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.

“...so We seized them with a seizure of one Exalted in Might and Perfect in Ability.”

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 54 – Al Qamar, Verses 43-47

٤٣ أَكْفَارُكُمْ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَوْلِيَّكُمْ أَمْ لَكُمْ بَرَاءَةٌ فِي الزُّبُرِ

٤٤ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ نَحْنُ جَمِيعٌ مُّنتَصِرُونَ

٤٥ سَيَهْرَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُولُونَ الدُّبُرَ

٤٦ بَلِ السَّاعَةُ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ أَدْهَىٰ وَأَمَرُّ

٤٧ إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعْرٍ

“Are your disbelievers better than those [former ones], or have you immunity in the scriptures?”

Or do they say, “We are an assembly supporting [each other]?”

[Their] assembly will be defeated, and they will turn their backs [in retreat].

But the Hour is their appointment and the Hour is more disastrous and more bitter.

Indeed, the criminals are in error and madness.”

“Are your disbelievers better than those [former ones], or have you immunity in the scriptures?...Indeed, the criminals are in error and madness.”

The non-muslims of Mecca did not possess even a fraction of the wealth and authority the previous nations were granted yet these things did not save them from the punishment of Allah, the Exalted, after they persistently and arrogantly disobeyed Him. Neither did they have any promise from Allah, the Exalted, of immunity from His punishment.

One must avoid adopting this foolish attitude and instead learn from the mistakes of the previous nations so that they avoid repeating history.

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.

“Are your disbelievers better than those [former ones], or have you immunity in the scriptures?...Indeed, the criminals are in error and madness.”

The non-muslims of Mecca did not possess even a fraction of the wealth and authority the previous nations were granted yet these things did not save them from the punishment of Allah, the Exalted, after they persistently and arrogantly disobeyed Him. Neither did they have any promise from Allah, the Exalted, of immunity from His punishment.

One must avoid adopting this foolish attitude and instead learn from the mistakes of the previous nations so that they avoid repeating history. A major cause of this misguided mentality is 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.”

“Or do they say, “We are an assembly supporting [each other]”? [Their] assembly will be defeated, and they will turn their backs [in retreat].”

An example of this is the Battle of Badr when the non-muslims of Mecca 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.

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 they say, “We are an assembly supporting [each other]”? [Their] assembly will be defeated, and they will turn their backs [in retreat].”

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 the Hour is their appointment [for due punishment]...”

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 the Hour is their appointment [for due punishment], and the Hour is more disastrous and more bitter.”

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.

“But the Hour is their appointment [for due punishment], and the Hour is more disastrous and more bitter.”

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.

“But the Hour is their appointment [for due punishment], and the Hour is more disastrous and more bitter.”

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.

“But the Hour is their appointment [for due punishment], and the Hour is more disastrous and more bitter.”

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.

“But the Hour is their appointment [for due punishment], and the Hour is more disastrous and more bitter.”

One must avoid this outcome by practically preparing 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 the Hour is their appointment [for due punishment], and the Hour is more disastrous and more bitter.”

One must avoid this outcome by practically preparing 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.

“Indeed, the criminals are in error and madness.”

The word madness can also mean blazing fire.

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 54 – Al Qamar, Verses 48-51

يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُونَ فِي النَّارِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ ذُوقُوا مَسَّ سَقَرَ ﴿٤٨﴾

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ ﴿٤٩﴾

وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ ﴿٥٠﴾

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا أَشْيَاعَكُمْ فَهَلْ مِنْ مَّذْكَرٍ ﴿٥١﴾

*"The Day they are dragged into the Fire on their faces [it will be said],
"Taste the touch of Saqar."*

Indeed, all things We created with predestination.

And Our command is but one, like a glance of the eye.

*And We have already destroyed your kinds, so is there any who will
remember?"*

***“The Day they are dragged into the Fire on their faces [it will be said],
"Taste the touch of Saqar.””***

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.

***“The Day they are dragged into the Fire on their faces [it will be said],
"Taste the touch of Saqar." Indeed, all things We created with
predestination.”***

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.”

“Indeed, all things We created with predestination.”

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.

“And Our command is but one, like a glance of the eye.”

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 Our command is but one, like a glance of the eye. And We have already destroyed your kinds, so is there any who will remember?”

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 Our command is but one, like a glance of the eye. And We have already destroyed your kinds, so is there any who will remember?”

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 Our command is but one, like a glance of the eye. And We have already destroyed your kinds, so is there any who will remember?”

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 Our command is but one, like a glance of the eye. And We have already destroyed your kinds, so is there any who will remember?”

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 54 – Al Qamar, Verses 52-53

وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوهُ فِي الزُّبُرِ ﴿٥٢﴾

وَكُلُّ صَغِيرٍ وَكَبِيرٍ مُّسْتَطَرٌّ ﴿٥٣﴾

“And everything they did is in written records.

And every small and great [thing] is inscribed.”

“And everything they did is in written records. And every small and great [thing] is inscribed.”

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 everything they did is in written records. And every small and great [thing] is inscribed.”

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

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

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

In addition, the one who speaks too much will only reflect on their actions and the hereafter a little as this requires silence. This will prevent one from assessing their deeds which inspires one to perform more righteous deeds and sincerely repent from their sins. This person will then be prevented from changing for the better.

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

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

“And everything they did is in written records. And every small and great [thing] is inscribed.”

If one desires their record to testify on their behalf on Judgement Day 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.

“And everything they did is in written records. And every small and great [thing] is inscribed.”

If one desires their record to testify on their behalf on Judgement Day then they must use 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.

“And everything they did is in written records. And every small and great [thing] is inscribed.”

If one desires their record to testify on their behalf on Judgement Day 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 54 – Al Qamar, Verses 54-55 of 55

٥٤ إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَهَرٍ

٥٥ فِي مَقْعَدٍ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and rivers.

In a seat of honor near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and rivers.”

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 among gardens and rivers.”

Righteousness involves inward belief supported by outward 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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and rivers. In a seat of honor near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”

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, the righteous will be among gardens and rivers. In a seat of honor near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”

This can also mean in a station of truth near Allah, the Exalted. One must adopt truthfulness in all aspects of their life if they desire the station of truth in the hereafter.

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.

“Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and rivers. In a seat of honor near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”

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.¹ 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.

“...a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”

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.”

“...a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.”

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.

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 55 – Ar Rahman, Verses 1-4

الرَّحْمَنُ ١

عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ٢

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ٣

عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ٤

“The Most Merciful.

Taught the Quran.

Created man.

[And] taught him speech.”

“The Most 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.

“The Most Merciful. Taught the Quran.”

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.

“The Most Merciful. Taught the Quran. Created man.”

Logically speaking, the creation of people should have been mentioned before the teaching of the Holy Quran. This specific order indicates that the purpose of mankind was to teach them the Holy Quran. One should therefore make it their top priority to sincerely obey and follow 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.

“The Most Merciful...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.”

“The Most Merciful...Created man. [And] taught him speech.”

One must therefore only use their speech in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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 55 – Ar Rahman, Verses 5-6

٥ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ

٦ وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ

“The sun and the moon [move] by precise calculation.

And the stars and trees prostrate [obey the commands of Allah, the Exalted].”

“The sun and the moon [move] by precise calculation.”

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...”

“The sun and the moon [move] by precise calculation. And the stars and trees prostrate [obey the commands of Allah, the Exalted].”

In reality, the whole creation submits to the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, whether willingly or unwillingly. The one who does so willingly will obtain peace and success in both worlds.

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...”

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verses 7-9

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٧﴾

أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ ﴿٨﴾

وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٩﴾

“And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance.

That you not transgress within the balance.

And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance.”

“And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance. That you not transgress within the balance.”

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 heaven He raised and imposed the balance. That you not transgress within the balance.”

As Allah, the Exalted, has created the universe in harmony, disobeying Him leads to a corruption in this harmony and must be avoided. History clearly shows that when one abandoned a balanced approach in all aspects of life taught by Islam it led to chaos and corruption within society. For example, during the time of the fourth rightly guided Caliph Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, a group of rebels spread chaos in society as they lost the balance between gaining knowledge and worshipping Allah, the Exalted. Their ignorance led them to misinterpreting Islamic knowledge which caused create harm to society. This has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6934.

One must avoid this attitude and instead adopt a balance in life. This is achieved by sincerely obeying 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.

“And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance. That you not transgress within the balance.”

As Allah, the Exalted, has created the universe in harmony disobeying Him leads to a corruption in this harmony and must be avoided.

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 heaven He raised and imposed the balance. That you not transgress within the balance. And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance.”

As Allah, the Exalted, has created the universe in harmony, disobeying Him leads to a corruption in this harmony and must be avoided.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings of Islam. In respect to business dealings a muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes not striving to con others by making them pay excessively for goods. A muslim should simply treat others how they desire

to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way, a muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters they should not mistreat others.

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

“And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance. That you not transgress within the balance. And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance.”

As Allah, the Exalted, has created the universe in harmony, disobeying Him leads to a corruption in this harmony and must be avoided.

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.¹ 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 the heaven He raised and imposed the balance. That you not transgress within the balance. And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance.”

As Allah, the Exalted, has created the universe in harmony, disobeying Him leads to a corruption in this harmony and must be avoided.

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 the heaven He raised and imposed the balance. That you not transgress within the balance. And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance.”

As Allah, the Exalted, has created the universe in harmony, disobeying Him leads to a corruption in this harmony and must be avoided.

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...”

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verses 10-12

﴿١٠﴾ وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ

﴿١١﴾ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ

﴿١٢﴾ وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ

“And the earth He laid [out] for the creatures.

Therein is fruit and palm trees having sheaths [of dates].

And grain having husks and scented plants.”

“And the earth He laid [out] for the creatures. Therein is fruit and palm trees having sheaths [of dates]. And grain having husks and scented plants.”

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 the earth He laid [out] for the creatures. Therein is fruit and palm trees having sheaths [of dates]. And grain having husks and scented plants.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, allocated all things, such as provision, to all creatures over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth.

It is important to understand that there are two aspects in respect to all situations, such as gaining one's provision. The first aspect is what Allah, the Exalted, has decided meaning, destiny; this will occur and nothing in creation can prevent this from occurring. As this is out of a person's hands it makes no sense to stress over this aspect as they have no influence on destiny irrespective of what they or anybody else does.

The second aspect is one's own efforts. This aspect a person has full control over and they should therefore concentrate on this aspect by using the means they have been provided such as their physical strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, which they have no control over, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to gain lawful provision in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents while avoiding the unlawful, excess, waste and extravagance.

To conclude, a muslim should never waste time stressing over things they have no control or influence over instead they should use the means they possess and act on those things which they have control over according to the teachings of Islam. This is what Allah, the Exalted, has commanded.

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verse 13

فَبِأَيِّ آءِآلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿١٣﴾

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verses 14-15

﴿١٤﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَلٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ

﴿١٥﴾ وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِّنْ نَّارٍ

“He created man from clay like [that of] pottery.

And He created the jinn from a smokeless flame of fire.”

“He created man from clay like [that of] pottery.”

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 created man from clay like [that of] pottery.”

Remembering the origins of mankind prevents 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.

“And He created the jinn from a smokeless flame of fire.”

Generally speaking, 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.

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verse 16

١٦ فَبِأَيِّ آءِالَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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:

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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.

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verse 17

١٧ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ

“[He is] Lord of the two sunrises and Lord of the two sunsets [during winter and summer].”

“[He is] Lord of the two sunrises and Lord of the two sunsets [during winter and summer].”

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.""

“[He is] Lord of the two sunrises and Lord of the two sunsets [during winter and summer].”

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 55 – Ar Rahman, Verse 18



فَبِأَيِّ آءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.

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Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verses 19-22

﴿١٩﴾ مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ

﴿٢٠﴾ يَنْبَغِيَانِ لَّا يَبْغِيَانِ

﴿٢١﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آءَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ

﴿٢٢﴾ يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ

“He released the two seas, meeting [one another].

Between them [two bodies of water] is a barrier so neither of them transgresses.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

From both of them [two bodies of water] emerge pearl and coral.”

“He released the two seas, meeting [one another]. Between them [two bodies of water] is a barrier so neither of them transgresses.”

This refers to the two bodies of water namely, the rivers/streams and the oceans. They differ in characteristics in order to serve different functions. For example, the oceans are salty in order to prevent the water and air from becoming foul due to the rotting sea life within it. The rivers/streams are sweet in order to provide palatable water for the creation. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 53:

“And it is He who has released [simultaneously] the two seas [i.e., bodies of water], one fresh and sweet and one salty and bitter, and He placed between them a barrier and prohibiting partition.”

Generally speaking, 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...”

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“...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.

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verse 23



فَبِأَيِّ آءِالَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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:

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Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verse 24

وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ ﴿٢٤﴾

“And to Him belong the ships [with sails] elevated in the sea like mountains.”

“And to Him belong the ships [with sails] elevated in the sea like mountains.”

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 to Him belong the ships [with sails] elevated in the sea like mountains.”

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 55 – Ar Rahman, Verse 25

٢٥ فَبِأَيِّ ءَالَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verses 26-27

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ
٢٦

وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ
٢٧

“Everyone upon it [the earth] will perish.

And there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor.”

“Everyone upon it [the earth] will perish.”

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.

“Everyone upon it [the earth] will perish.”

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?”

“Everyone upon it [the earth] will perish.”

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.

“Everyone upon it [the earth] will perish.”

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?

“Everyone upon it [the earth] will perish.”

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.

“Everyone upon it [the earth] will perish.”

As death is inevitable and its time unknown one must practically prepare for it and what comes after it 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.

“Everyone upon it [the earth] will perish.”

As death is inevitable and its time unknown one must practically prepare for it and what comes after it 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.

“Everyone upon it [the earth] will perish. And there will remain the Face of your Lord...”

Allah, the Exalted, existed eternally before He created the creation and will continue to exist without any end.

The one who understands this divine name will often remember their mortality meaning, their death. This will inspire them to prepare for it and the hereafter instead of remaining heedless to it. This preparation involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

A muslim must act on this divine name by prioritising the actions which will endure through the grace of Allah, the Exalted, namely, righteous deeds, over the worldly actions which will perish with this world. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3681, that a muslim will continue to receive the reward for any type of on-going charity they have done even after their death. This is a type of charity where the creation continues to benefit from it, such as a water pump. Simply put if a muslim directs their actions and efforts towards the material world they will perish yet, they will still be held accountable for them in the next world. Whereas, the one who directs their efforts and actions towards Allah, the Exalted, will find that their deeds endure and they will benefit them in every step of their journey to the hereafter, such as their grave. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 96:

“Whatever you have will end, but what Allah has is lasting...”

“...your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor.”

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.”

“...your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor.”

This indicates the qualities of infinite Sublimity and Might. The muslim who understands this divine name will continuously fear Allah, the Exalted, throughout their day which will inspire them to remain steadfast in His obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

A muslim should act on this divine name by rejecting all lowly acts and characteristics and instead adopt lofty characteristics. This is arguably the greatest tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verse 28

فَيَأَيُّ آءِآلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٢٨﴾

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verse 29

يَسْأَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ ﴿٢٩﴾

“Whoever is within the heavens and earth asks Him; every day He is in [i.e., bringing about] a matter.”

“Whoever is within the heavens and earth asks Him...”

This includes asking willingly or unwillingly. For example, the human body asks Allah, the Exalted, to provide it with oxygen and food, even if the tongue denies the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3371, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that supplication is the essence of worship.

This is because it is a practical demonstration of humility and one's servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, as it is befitting for the servant to ask from the Master.

It is important to know that according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604, every good supplication is accepted in three ways. It is either fulfilled, the equivalent reward is given in the hereafter or an equivalent evil is removed from one's life.

In chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60, Allah, the Exalted, guarantees a response to all those who perform supplication. Therefore, one should always bear this in mind and persist in supplications.

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

Even before supplicating one should ensure their earnings are lawful and what they consume is lawful. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2989, that the supplication of a person who earns and consumes the unlawful will never be accepted.

The first etiquette of supplication is that one should try to face the Qibla when supplicating. This was the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. An example of this action is found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2899.

One should raise their hands begging Allah, the Exalted, to fulfill their desire as this was the practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1030.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the

Exalted, is too shy and generous to turn away a beggar empty handed who raises their hands to Him.

One should begin and conclude their supplication by first praising Allah, the Exalted, and then sending blessings upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1481.

In fact, as mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 486, a person's supplication remains suspended between the Heavens and the Earth until they send blessings upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

One should praise Allah, the Exalted, with phrases mentioned in the Holy Quran or the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The beautiful names of Allah, the Exalted, are found extensively throughout these divine teachings and should be utilised. For example, chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 24:

“He is Allah, the Creator, the Producer, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names...”

The best supplications are found in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and therefore should be used. For example, chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 41:

“Our Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers the Day the account is established.”

But it is absolutely acceptable to supplicate for specific things as long as they are lawful.

As advised in the Holy Quran one should supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, with humility hoping for His mercy and in fear of His greatness. Chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 56:

“...And invoke Him in fear and aspiration...”

It is vital to supplicate with enthusiasm full well believing Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil one’s needs. In addition, as advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3479, Allah, the Exalted, does not respond to someone who supplicates while heedless or distracted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3505, that when the following verse of the Holy Quran is recited the supplication is always accepted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 87:

“...There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.”

One should seal their supplication with the word, Ameen, as this ensures its acceptance. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 938.

After the supplication is concluded it is a practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to wipe one's hands over their face. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1492.

Finally, one should be persistent in supplicating as giving up is a hasty action which can lead to the supplication being unfulfilled. This warning is given in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3387.

One should make it a habit to remember Allah, the Exalted, in times of ease so that Allah, the Exalted, will help them in times of difficulty. This is advised in a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803. As advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3499, Allah, the Exalted, readily accepts the supplication made after the obligatory prayers and in the last part of the night. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6321, advises that in the last part of the night the divine descent occurs at which point Allah, the Exalted, calls out and responds to supplications. There is a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 521, which advises that the supplication between the two call to prayers is never rejected. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that a muslim is closest to Allah, the Exalted, while they are prostrating and they should therefore supplicate to Him at this time. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1138. As mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1046, there is an hour during every Friday where Allah, the Exalted, readily accepts supplications. When a fasting person breaks their fast their supplication is also accepted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1753. One should ask the sick to supplicate for them as it has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1441, that their supplications are like the supplications of the Angels. The supplication made when drinking Zamzam water is always accepted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3062. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2540, advises that the supplication at the time when it rains is accepted. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534, encourages people to supplicate for others in their absence as they are readily accepted. If one is facing any form of oppression they should supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, as they will be accepted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1905. This same Hadith advises that the supplication of the traveller is never rejected. Finally, one should encourage their parents to supplicate for them as they are readily accepted. This is supported by a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3862.

Some do not regularly supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, as they claim that He is All Aware and requires no one to inform Him of their desires. Even though, this is a fact it is better to supplicate as this is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them all, and has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

“And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you.” Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible.”

Supplicating is an excellent way to demonstrate one’s humility and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In fact, as mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3370, nothing is more honourable to Allah, the Exalted, than supplication. Finally, Allah, the Exalted, becomes angry when a person does not supplicate to Him as it may indicate they believe they are independent of Allah, the Exalted, which is not true. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3373.

“Whoever is within the heavens and earth asks Him...”

This includes asking willingly or unwillingly. For example, the human body asks Allah, the Exalted, to provide it with oxygen and food, even if the tongue denies the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

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.

“...every day He is in [bringing about] a matter.”

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...”

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verse 30

فَبِأَيِّ آءِالَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ٣٠

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verses 31-35

سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيُّهَ الثَّقَلَانِ ﴿٣١﴾

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٢﴾

يَمَعَشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَن تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٤﴾

يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شُوَاظٌ مِّن نَّارٍ وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْصِرَانِ ﴿٣٥﴾

“We will attend to you, O prominent beings.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

O company of jinn and mankind, if you are able to pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth [to escape], then pass. You will not pass except by authority [from Allah].

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

There will be sent upon you a flame of fire and smoke, and you will not defend yourselves.”

“We will attend to you, O prominent beings.”

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.”

“We will attend to you, O prominent beings [on Judgement Day]...O company of jinn and mankind, if you are able to pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth, then pass. You will not pass except by authority [from Allāh].”...There will be sent upon you a flame of fire and smoke, and you will not defend yourselves.”

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.

“We will attend to you, O prominent beings [on Judgement Day]...O company of jinn and mankind, if you are able to pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth, then pass. You will not pass except by authority [from Allāh].”...There will be sent upon you a flame of fire and smoke, and you will not defend yourselves.”

One must prepare for their Final Judgement 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.

“We will attend to you, O prominent beings [on Judgement Day]...O company of jinn and mankind, if you are able to pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth, then pass. You will not pass except by authority [from Allāh].”...There will be sent upon you a flame of fire and smoke, and you will not defend yourselves.”

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.

“We will attend to you, O prominent beings [on Judgement Day]...O company of jinn and mankind, if you are able to pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth, then pass. You will not pass except by authority [from Allāh].”...There will be sent upon you a flame of fire and smoke, and you will not defend yourselves.”

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

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.

“We will attend to you, O prominent beings [on Judgement Day]...O company of jinn and mankind, if you are able to pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth, then pass. You will not pass except by authority [from Allāh].”...There will be sent upon you a flame of fire and smoke, and you will not defend yourselves.”

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

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.

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verse 36



فَبِأَيِّ ءَالَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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]...”

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Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verses 37-45

فَإِذَا أَنْشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ ﴿٣٧﴾

فَبِأَيِّ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٨﴾

فِيَوْمِئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٣٩﴾

فَبِأَيِّ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٠﴾

يَعْرِفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ ﴿٤١﴾

فَبِأَيِّ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٢﴾

هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ ءَانِ ﴿٤٤﴾

فَبِأَيِّ ءَالَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٥﴾

“And when the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

Then on that Day none will be asked about his sin among men or jinn.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

The criminals will be known by their marks, and they will be seized by the forelocks and the feet.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

This is Hell, which the criminals deny.

They will circulate between it and scalding water, heated [to the utmost degree].

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

“And when the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil.”

Many awesome things will occur on the Day of Judgement. If one desires to be saved then they must practically prepare for it.

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 when the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil.”

Many awesome things will occur on the Day of Judgement. If one desires to be saved then they must practically prepare for it.

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 when the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil.”

Many awesome things will occur on the Day of Judgement. If one desires to be saved then they must practically prepare for it.

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 when the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil...Then on that Day none will be asked about his sin among men or jinn.”

This could mean that no one will be asked to make amends for the sins they committed during their lives 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?”

“And when the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil... Then on that Day none will be asked about his sin among men or jinn.”

This could also mean that one will not need to be questioned regarding their sins as their very limbs and blessings will either testify for them or against them. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 20:

“Until, when they reach it, their hearing and their eyes and their skins will testify against them of what they used to do.”

Therefore, if one desires their blessings to testify on their behalf then they must use them 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 when the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil... Then on that Day none will be asked about his sin among men or jinn.”

This could also mean that one will not need to be questioned regarding their sins as their very limbs and blessings will either testify for them or against them. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 20:

“Until, when they reach it, their hearing and their eyes and their skins will testify against them of what they used to do.”

Therefore, if one desires their blessings to testify on their behalf then they must use them 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 when the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil...The criminals will be known by their marks, and they will be seized by the forelocks and the feet.”

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 the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil...The criminals will be known by their marks, and they will be seized by the forelocks and the feet...This is Hell, which the criminals deny. They will circulate between it and scalding water, heated [to the utmost degree].”

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 the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil...The criminals will be known by their marks, and they will be seized by the forelocks and the feet...This is Hell, which the criminals deny. They will circulate between it and scalding water, heated [to the utmost degree].”

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 the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil...The criminals will be known by their marks, and they will be seized by the forelocks and the feet...This is Hell, which the criminals deny. They will circulate between it and scalding water, heated [to the utmost degree].”

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 the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil...The criminals will be known by their marks, and they will be seized by the forelocks and the feet...This is Hell, which the criminals deny. They will circulate between it and scalding water, heated [to the utmost degree].”

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 when the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil...The criminals will be known by their marks, and they will be seized by the forelocks and the feet...This is Hell, which the criminals deny. They will circulate between it and scalding water, heated [to the utmost degree]. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

The warnings of Hell are terrifying but in reality they are a huge favour from Allah, the Exalted, as they encourage one to practically prepare for Judgement Day. If Allah, the Exalted, concealed these warnings then most people would not have bothered with preparing for it and this would have led to their destruction.

Generally speaking, 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.”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verses 46-61

وَلِمَن خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ ۖ

فِي أَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ۖ

ذَوَاتَا أَفْنَانٍ ۖ

فِي أَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ۖ

فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ تَجْرِيَانِ ۖ

فِي أَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ۖ

فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجَانِ ۖ

فَبِأَيِّ ءَالَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٣﴾

مُتَّكِعِينَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ بَطَآئِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ وَجَنَى الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانٍ

﴿٥٤﴾

فَبِأَيِّ ءَالَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٥﴾

فِيهِنَّ قَاصِرَاتٌ الطَّرْفِ لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ

﴿٥٦﴾

فَبِأَيِّ ءَالَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٧﴾

كَأَنَّهُنَّ الْيَاقُوتُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٥٨﴾

فَبِأَيِّ ءَالَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٩﴾

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَنِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَنُ ﴿٦٠﴾

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٦١﴾

“But for he who has feared the position of his Lord are two gardens.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

Having [spreading] branches.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

In both of them are two springs, flowing.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

In both of them [gardens of Paradise] are of every fruit, two kinds.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

[They are] reclining on beds whose linings are of silk brocade, and the fruit of the two gardens is hanging low.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

In them are women limiting [their] glances, untouched before them by man or jinni.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

As if they [spouses of Paradise] were rubies and coral.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

Is the reward for good [anything] but good?

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?"

“But for he who has feared the position of his Lord are two gardens.”

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.

“But for he who has feared the position of his Lord are two gardens.”

Piety is an inward state which is supported by physical 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 for he who has feared the position of his Lord are two gardens.”

This verse includes adopting excellence of faith.

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.

“But for he who has feared the position of his Lord are two gardens.”

This verse also includes fearing standing in front of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day for one’s final reckoning. Truly fearing it involves practically 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.

“But for he who has feared the position of his Lord are two gardens.”

This verse also includes fearing standing in front of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day for one’s final reckoning. Truly fearing it involves practically 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.

“But for he who has feared the position of his Lord are two gardens...[They are] reclining on beds...”

Whoever strives in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will relax in the next world. But whoever is lazy in this world will find it difficult in the next.

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 for he who has feared the position of his Lord are two gardens...Having [spreading] branches...In both of them are two springs, flowing...In both of them are of every fruit, two kinds. [They are] reclining on beds whose linings are of silk brocade, and the fruit of the two gardens is hanging low. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.

Muslims should make it a top priority to act on this righteous deed and strive to feed others especially, the poor on a regular basis. This is an amazing deed which does not require much wealth. Each person should feed others according to their capacity even if it is only half a date fruit as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1417, that this will protect them from the fire of Hell on Judgement Day. This leaves people with no excuse from abstaining from this righteous deed.

“But for he who has feared the position of his Lord are two gardens...Having [spreading] branches...In both of them are two springs, flowing...In both of them are of every fruit, two kinds. [They are] reclining on beds whose linings are of silk brocade, and the fruit of the two gardens is hanging low...In them are women limiting [their] glances, untouched before them by man or jinni...As if they were rubies and coral. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny? Is the reward for good [anything] but good?”

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 reward for good [anything] but good?”

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 themself by being kind to others as in reality they are only benefiting themself in this world and the next. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 6:

“And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself...”

“Is the reward for good [anything] but good?”

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.

“Is the reward for good [anything] but good?”

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.

“Is the reward for good [anything] but good?”

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.

“Is the reward for good [anything] but good?”

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.

“Is the reward for good [anything] but good?”

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.

“Is the reward for good [anything] but good?”

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.

“Is the reward for good [anything] but good?”

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.”

“Is the reward for good [anything] but good?”

Similarly, the outcome of evil is evil.

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 which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verses 62-77

وَمِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّتَانِ ﴿٦٢﴾

فَبِأَيِّ ءَالٍ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٣﴾

مُدَّهَامَّتَانِ ﴿٦٤﴾

فَبِأَيِّ ءَالٍ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٥﴾

فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ نَضَّاخَتَانِ ﴿٦٦﴾

فَبِأَيِّ ءَالٍ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٧﴾

فِيهِمَا فَكِيهَةٌ وَنَخْلٌ وَرُمَّانٌ ﴿٦٨﴾

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٩﴾

فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حِسَانٌ ﴿٧٠﴾

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٧١﴾

حُورٌ مَّقْصُورَاتٌ فِي الْخِيَامِ ﴿٧٢﴾

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٧٣﴾

لَمْ يَطْمِئِنَّهُنَّ إِنَّنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٧٤﴾

فَبِأَيِّ ءَالَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٧٥﴾

﴿٧٦﴾ مُتَّكِعِينَ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ وَعَبْقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ

فَبِأَيِّ ءَالَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٧٧﴾

“And below them [two gardens on Paradise] both [in excellence] are two [other] gardens.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

Dark green [in color].

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

In both of them [gardens of Paradise] are two springs, spouting.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

In both of them [gardens of Paradise] are fruit and palm trees and pomegranates.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

In them are good and beautiful women.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

Fair [maidens] ones reserved in pavilions.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

[spouses of Paradise] Untouched before them by man or jinni.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

Reclining on green cushions and beautiful fine carpets.

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?"

“And below them [two gardens on Paradise] both [in excellence] are two [other] gardens. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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 below them [two gardens on Paradise] both [in excellence] are two [other] gardens...Dark green [in color]...In both of them are two springs, spouting...In both of them are fruit and palm trees and pomegranates. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.

Muslims should make it a top priority to act on this righteous deed and strive to feed others especially, the poor on a regular basis. This is an amazing deed which does not require much wealth. Each person should feed others according to their capacity even if it is only half a date fruit as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1417, that this will protect them from the fire of Hell on Judgement Day. This leaves people with no excuse from abstaining from this righteous deed.

“And below them [two gardens on Paradise] both [in excellence] are two [other] gardens...Reclining on green cushions and beautiful fine carpets.”

Whoever strives in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will relax in the next world. But whoever is lazy in this world will find it difficult in the next.

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 below them [two gardens on Paradise] both [in excellence] are two [other] gardens...Dark green [in color]... In both of them are two springs, spouting...In both of them are fruit and palm trees and pomegranates...In them are good and beautiful women...Fair ones reserved in pavilions...Untouched before them by man or jinni...Reclining on green cushions and beautiful fine carpets. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.”

“So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”

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.

Chapter 55 – Ar Rahman, Verse 78 of 78



نُبْرَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

“Blessed is the name of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor.”

“Blessed is the name of your Lord...”

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.

“...Owner of Majesty and Honor.”

This indicates the qualities of infinite Sublimity and Might. The muslim who understands this divine name will continuously fear Allah, the Exalted, throughout their day which will inspire them to remain steadfast in His obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

A muslim should act on this divine name by rejecting all lowly acts and characteristics and instead adopt lofty characteristics. 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.”

“...Owner of Majesty and Honor.”

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.”

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 56 – Al Waqi'ah, Verses 1-6

إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ١

لَيْسَ لَوْعِهَا كَاذِبَةٌ ٢

خَافِضَةٌ رَّافِعَةٌ ٣

إِذَا رُجَّتِ الْأَرْضُ رَجًا ٤

وَبُسَّتِ الْجِبَالُ بَسًا ٥

فَكَانَتْ هَبَاءً مُنْبَثًا



“When the Occurrence occurs.

There is, at its occurrence, no denial.

It will bring down [some] and raise up [others].

When the earth is shaken with convulsion.

And the mountains are broken down, crumbling.

And become dust dispersing.”

“When the Occurrence occurs. There is, at its occurrence, no denial.”

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.

“When the Occurrence occurs. There is, at its occurrence, no denial.”

As the Day of Judgement is inevitable one must practically prepare for it by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Even if some believe it is far away, one’s death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their judgement begins as they can no longer perform 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.

“When the Occurrence occurs. There is, at its occurrence, no denial.”

As the Day of Judgement is inevitable one must practically prepare for it by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Even if some believe it is far away, one's death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their judgement begins as they can no longer perform 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?”

“When the Occurrence occurs. There is, at its occurrence, no denial.”

As the Day of Judgement is inevitable one must practically prepare for it by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Even if some believe it is far away, one's death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their judgement begins as they can no longer perform 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.

***“When the Occurrence occurs. There is, at its occurrence, no denial.
It will bring down [some] and raise up [others].”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Abaser and the Exalter. Allah, the Exalted, is the One who abases those who disobey Him. Even if a disobedient person gains some worldly success it will ultimately become a curse for them. Allah, the Exalted, is the One who exalts those who obey Him by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Even if an obedient muslim faces trials and difficulties in the world they will ultimately be exalted by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

A muslim who understands this divine name will therefore not seek worldly success by pleasing the creation or through worldly things if it leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, as they know this path only leads to ultimate abasement and disgrace in both worlds.

A muslim must act on this divine name by praising the things which Allah, the Exalted, has raised and disliking the things which Allah, the Exalted, has abased. This must be shown through actions not just words. For example, they must praise the hereafter by actively striving to prepare for it. And they must dislike the excess of this material world knowing Allah, the Exalted, has dispraised it as it prevents a muslim from adequately preparing for the hereafter.

***“When the Occurrence occurs. There is, at its occurrence, no denial.
It will bring down [some] and raise up [others].”***

This indicates that the standard for success in the hereafter is different from the standard for success in this world. One must understand the difference between the two and work according to the standard for success in the hereafter if they desire to be raised up in rank on the Day of Judgement.

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.”

***“When the Occurrence occurs. There is, at its occurrence, no denial.
It will bring down [some] and raise up [others].”***

This indicates that the standard for success in the hereafter is different from the standard for success in this world. One must understand the difference between the two and work according to the standard for success in the hereafter if they desire to be raised up in rank on the Day of Judgement.

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.”

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It will bring down [some] and raise up [others].”***

This indicates that the standard for success in the hereafter is different from the standard for success in this world. One must understand the difference between the two and work according to the standard for success in the hereafter if they desire to be raised up in rank on the Day of Judgement.

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.””

***“When the Occurrence occurs. There is, at its occurrence, no denial.
It will bring down [some] and raise up [others].”***

This indicates that the standard for success in the hereafter is different from the standard for success in this world. One must adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to the hereafter and this world in order to work according to the standard for success in the hereafter if they desire to be raised up in rank on the Day of Judgement.

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...”

***“When the Occurrence occurs. There is, at its occurrence, no denial.
It will bring down [some] and raise up [others].”***

This indicates that the standard for success in the hereafter is different from the standard for success in this world. One must adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to the hereafter and this world in order to work according to the standard for success in the hereafter if they desire to be raised up in rank on 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.

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It will bring down [some] and raise up [others].”***

This indicates that the standard for success in the hereafter is different from the standard for success in this world. One must adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to the hereafter and this world in order to work according to the standard for success in the hereafter if they desire to be raised up in rank on the Day of Judgement.

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.

***“When the Occurrence occurs. There is, at its occurrence, no denial.
It will bring down [some] and raise up [others].”***

This indicates that the standard for success in the hereafter is different from the standard for success in this world. One must adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to the hereafter and this world in order to work according to the standard for success in the hereafter if they desire to be raised up in rank on the Day of Judgement.

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.”

***“When the Occurrence occurs. There is, at its occurrence, no denial.
It will bring down [some] and raise up [others].”***

This indicates that the standard for success in the hereafter is different from the standard for success in this world. One must adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to the hereafter and this world in order to work according to the standard for success in the hereafter if they desire to be raised up in rank on the Day of Judgement.

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 Occurrence occurs. There is, at its occurrence, no denial.
It will bring down [some] and raise up [others].”***

This indicates that the standard for success in the hereafter is different from the standard for success in this world. One must adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to the hereafter and this world in order to work according to the standard for success in the hereafter if they desire to be raised up in rank on the Day of Judgement. 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.

“When the Occurrence occurs. There is, at its occurrence, no denial...When the earth is shaken with convulsion. And the mountains are broken down, crumbling. And become dust dispersing.”

Many awesome things will occur on the Day of Judgement. If one desires to be saved then they must practically prepare for it.

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.

“When the Occurrence occurs. There is, at its occurrence, no denial...When the earth is shaken with convulsion. And the mountains are broken down, crumbling. And become dust dispersing.”

Many awesome things will occur on the Day of Judgement. If one desires to be saved then they must practically prepare for it.

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.

“When the Occurrence occurs. There is, at its occurrence, no denial...When the earth is shaken with convulsion. And the mountains are broken down, crumbling. And become dust dispersing.”

Many awesome things will occur on the Day of Judgement. If one desires to be saved then they must practically prepare for it.

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.

Chapter 56 – Al Waqi'ah, Verses 7-26

وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً ﴿٧﴾

فَأَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ﴿٨﴾

وَأَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ ﴿٩﴾

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿١١﴾

فِي جَنَّاتٍ النَّعِيمِ ﴿١٢﴾

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ١٣

وَقَلِيلٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ ١٤

عَلَى سُرْرٍ مَوْضُونَةٍ ١٥

مُتَّكِعِينَ عَلَيْهَا مُتَّقِبِلِينَ ١٦

يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُخَلَّدُونَ ١٧

بِأَكْوَابٍ وَأَبَارِيقَ وَكَأْسٍ مِّنْ مَّعِينٍ ١٨

لَا يُصَدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُنْزِفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

وَفَكَهَةَ مِمَّا يَتَخَيَّرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

وَحُورٍ عِينٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

كَأَمْثَلِ اللَّوْلُؤِ الْمَكْنُونِ ﴿٢٣﴾

جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

٢٥ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْتِيهَا

٢٦ إِلَّا قِيلًا سَلَامًا سَلَامًا

“And you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day].

Then the companions of the right - what are the companions of the right?

And the companions of the left - what are companions of the left?

And the forerunners, the forerunners.

Those are the ones brought near [to Allah].

In the Gardens of Pleasure.

A [large] company of the former peoples.

And a few of the later peoples.

On thrones woven [with ornament].

Reclining on them, facing each other.

There will circulate among them young boys made eternal.

With vessels, pitchers and a cup [of wine] from a flowing spring.

No headache will they have therefrom, nor will they be intoxicated.

And fruit of what they select.

And the meat of fowl, from whatever they desire.

And [for them are] fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes.

The likenesses of pearls well-protected.

As reward for what they used to do.

They will not hear therein ill speech or commission of sin.

Only a saying [of] peace, peace.”

“And you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day].”

Muslims can be split into three groups. The first group are the best and consist of the muslims who hand their lives and possessions over to Allah, the Exalted, thereby fulfilling the purpose of their creation. They only take from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities and dedicate the rest of their efforts in gaining and acting on knowledge so that they can strengthen their faith and gain the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Outwardly they may seem as if they do not enjoy life in this world but in reality they obtain more peace in it than the other types of muslims. Their reckoning on Judgment Day will be easy through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

The second group consists of those muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties and whatever traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they come across without putting extra effort in obtaining or acting on Islamic knowledge. They dedicate the majority of their efforts to gaining and enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. As they avoid the unlawful it is hoped they will gain the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in the next world. But as they indulged in the material world their accountability will be long. And as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6536, whoever has their deeds scrutinised will be punished. Standing and witnessing the horrors of the Day of Judgment for an extremely long time because of one's enjoyment in the world is a form of punishment.

The final group of muslims are the worse type as they do not dedicate their lives to Allah, the Exalted, like the best group but neither do they enjoy the lawful pleasures of the material world like the second group. These people instead hoard the worldly things they obtain without fulfilling their lawful desires. This attitude causes them to stand between the two other groups meaning, they will not enjoy the lawful things of this world nor will they have an easy reckoning on the Day of Judgment because of the worldly things they obtained.

It is therefore important for muslims not to belong to this final group as this is a clear loss. A muslim should try to belong to the best group but if they really cannot manage this then they should at least join the second group by fulfilling their obligatory duties, enjoy only the lawful pleasures of this world and hope for the forgiveness and mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

“And you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]. Then the companions of the right - what are the companions of the right?...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh].”

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 you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the companions of the left - what are companions of the left?...”

As the right hand is connected to good deeds the left hand is connected to sins.

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 you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the companions of the left - what are companions of the left?...”

As the right hand is connected to good deeds the left hand is connected to sins.

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 become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the companions of the left - what are companions of the left?...”

As the right hand is connected to good deeds the left hand is connected to sins.

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 you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the companions of the left - what are companions of the left?...”

As the right hand is connected to good deeds the left hand is connected to sins.

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 become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the companions of the left - what are companions of the left?...”

As the right hand is connected to good deeds the left hand is connected to sins.

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 become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the companions of the left - what are companions of the left?...”

As the right hand is connected to good deeds the left hand is connected to sins.

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 become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the companions of the left - what are companions of the left?...”

As the right hand is connected to good deeds the left hand is connected to sins.

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 you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh].”

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 you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh].”

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.

“And you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh].”

They adopt excellence of faith thereby feeling the constant presence of Allah, the Exalted.

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 you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]...A [large] company of the former peoples. And a few of the later peoples.”

The former people refers to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and those close to their time as they were undoubtedly the best group of people that have ever existed after the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. The few of the later peoples refers to those who came after the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

The fact the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, physically observed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his lifetime is definitely one reason for their elevated status. But anyone who knows about their life and their righteous deeds understands that their superiority is due to more than just this unique and great deed.

One of the main reasons for their superiority is shown in a Hadith involving the Companion Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, which is found in Sahih Muslim, number 6515. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was once riding on his conveyance in the desert when he came across a Bedouin. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, greeted the Bedouin, placed his turban on the Bedouin's head and insisted that the Bedouin ride on his conveyance. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was told that the greeting he gave the Bedouin was more than enough as the Bedouin would have been greatly pleased at the fact that the great Companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with

him, greeted him. Yet, Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, went much further than this and showed the Bedouin great respect. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he only did this because the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised that one of the best ways a person can honour their parent is by showing love and respect to their parent's relatives and friends. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, added that the Bedouin's father was a friend of his father the Commander of the Faithful, Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him.

This incident indicates the superiority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. They completely submitted to the teachings of Islam. They not only fulfilled the obligatory duties and avoided all sins but completely fulfilled all acts which were recommended to them to the highest possible degree. Their submission caused them to put aside their own desires and only act to please Allah, the Exalted. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily ignored the Bedouin as none of the actions he done were obligatory yet, unlike many muslims who would use this excuse, he completely submitted to the teachings of Islam and acted the way he did.

It is the lack of submission to the teachings of Islam which has weakened the faith of muslims. Some only fulfil the obligatory duties and turn away from other righteous deeds, such as voluntary charity, which contradict their desires by claiming the actions are not obligatory. All muslims desire to end up with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. But how is this possible if they do not follow their path or way? If a muslim follows a path other than theirs then how can they end up with

them? To end up with them one must follow their path. But this is only possible if one completely submits to the teachings of Islam like they did instead of cherry picking the deeds which suit their desires.

“And you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]...A [large] company of the former peoples. And a few of the later peoples.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7400, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who continues worshipping Allah, the Exalted, during widespread turmoil and seditions is like the one who has emigrated to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his lifetime.

The reward of emigrating to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his life time was a great deed. In fact, it erased all of one's previous sins according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 321.

Worshipping Allah, the Exalted, means to continue sincerely obeying 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.

It is obvious that the time mentioned in this Hadith has arrived. It has become very easy to become misguided from the teachings of Islam as worldly desires have opened up for the muslim nation. Therefore, muslims should not get distracted by them and avoid controversial issues and people and instead remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, in

every aspect of their life if they desire to obtain the reward mentioned in this Hadith.

“And you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]...A [large] company of the former peoples. And a few of the later peoples.”

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 you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]. In the Gardens of Pleasure...On thrones woven [with ornament]. Reclining on them...”

Whoever strives in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will relax in the next world. But whoever is lazy in this world will find it difficult in the next.

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 you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]. In the Gardens of Pleasure...On thrones woven [with ornament]. Reclining on them, facing each other.”

These verses indicate the importance of good companionship, as this leads to good companions 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.”

“And you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]. In the Gardens of Pleasure...On thrones woven [with ornament]. Reclining on them, facing each other.”

These verses indicate the importance of good companionship, as this leads to good companions 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].”

“And you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]. In the Gardens of Pleasure...There will circulate among them young boys made eternal. With vessels, pitchers and a cup [of wine] from a flowing spring. No headache will they have therefrom, nor will they be intoxicated.”

Two reasons are mentioned which indicate why intoxicants must be avoided in this world.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3371, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a muslim must never consume alcohol as it is the key to all evil.

Unfortunately, this major sin has increased amongst the muslims over time. This is the key to all evil as it gives rise to other sins. This is quite obvious as a drunk loses control over their tongue and physical actions. One only needs to look at the news to observe how much crime is committed due to drinking alcohol. Even those who drink moderately only cause damage to their bodies which science has proven. The physical and mental diseases associated with alcohol are numerous and cause a heavy burden on the National Health Service and the tax payers. It is the key to all evil as it negatively affects all three aspects of a person namely, their body, mind and soul. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 90:

“O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.”

The fact that drinking alcohol has been placed next to things which are associated with polytheism in this verse highlights how important it is to avoid.

It is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3376, that the one who drinks alcohol regularly will not enter Paradise.

Spreading the Islamic greeting of peace is a key to obtaining Paradise according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 68. Yet, a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 1017, advises muslims not to greet someone who regularly drinks alcohol.

Alcohol is a unique major sin as it has been cursed from ten different angles in a single Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3380. This includes the alcohol itself, the one who produces it, the one it is produced for, the one who sells it, the one who buys it, the one who carries it, the one to whom it is carried to, the one who uses the wealth obtained through selling it, the one who drinks it and the one who pours it. The one who

deals with something that has been cursed like this will not obtain true success unless they sincerely repent.

“And you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]. In the Gardens of Pleasure...And fruit of what they select. And the meat of fowl, from whatever they desire.”

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.

Muslims should make it a top priority to act on this righteous deed and strive to feed others especially, the poor on a regular basis. This is an amazing deed which does not require much wealth. Each person should feed others according to their capacity even if it is only half a date fruit as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1417, that this will protect them from the fire of Hell on Judgement Day. This leaves people with no excuse from abstaining from this righteous deed.

“And you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]. In the Gardens of Pleasure...They will not hear therein ill speech...”

As evil speech has no place in Paradise it must be avoided in this world also.

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

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

Speech can be of three types. The first is evil speech which should be avoided at all costs. The second is vain speech which only causes one to waste time which will lead to a great regret on Judgment Day. In addition, the first step of sinful speech is often vain speech. So it is safer to avoid

this type of speech. The final type is good speech which should always be adopted. Based on these aspects two thirds of speech should be removed from one's life.

In addition, the one who speaks too much will only reflect on their actions and the hereafter a little as this requires silence. This will prevent one from assessing their deeds which inspires one to perform more righteous deeds and sincerely repent from their sins. This person will then be prevented from changing for the better.

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

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

“And you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]. In the Gardens of Pleasure...They will not hear therein ill speech...Only a saying [of] peace, peace.”

Those who desire to hear this greeting in the hereafter must 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 you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]. In the Gardens of Pleasure...They will not hear therein ill speech or commission of sin.”

As sins have no place in Paradise they must be avoided in this world also.

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.

“And you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]. In the Gardens of Pleasure...As reward for what they used to do.”

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 you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]. In the Gardens of Pleasure...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.

“And you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]. In the Gardens of Pleasure...As reward for what they used to do.”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly they must also treat others with good character otherwise they will not succeed as the only truly successful people are the believers.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will

enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be rewarded like the muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

“And you become [of] three kinds [on Judgement Day]...And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]. In the Gardens of Pleasure...On thrones woven [with ornament]. Reclining on them, facing each other. There will circulate among them young boys made eternal. With vessels, pitchers and a cup [of wine] from a flowing spring. No headache will they have therefrom, nor will they be intoxicated. And fruit of what they select. And the meat of fowl, from whatever they desire. And [for them are] fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes. The likenesses of pearls well-protected. As reward for what they used to do. They will not hear therein ill speech or commission of sin. Only a saying [of] peace, peace.”

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 56 – Al Waqi'ah, Verses 27-40

وَأَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٢٧﴾

فِي سِدْرٍ مَّخْضُودٍ ﴿٢٨﴾

وَطَلْحٍ مَّنْضُودٍ ﴿٢٩﴾

وَزَيْلٍ مَّمْدُودٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

وَمَاءٍ مَّسْكُوبٍ ﴿٣١﴾

وَفَكْهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

لَا مَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

وَفَرَشٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ ﴿٣٤﴾

إِنَّا أَنْشَأْنَهُنَّ إِنِشَاءً ﴿٣٥﴾

فَجَعَلْنَهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا ﴿٣٦﴾

عُرُبًا أَتْرَابًا ﴿٣٧﴾

لِأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٣٨﴾

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

 وَثَلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْأَخْرِبِ

“The companions of the right - what are the companions of the right?

[They will be] among lote trees with thorns removed.

And [banana] trees layered [with fruit].

And shade extended.

And water poured out.

And fruit, abundant [and varied].

[fruits] Neither limited [to season] nor forbidden.

And [upon] beds raised high.

Indeed, We have produced them [i.e., the women of Paradise] in a [new] creation.

And made them virgins.

Devoted [to their husbands] and of equal age.

For the companions of the right.

A company of the former peoples.

And a company of the later peoples.”

“The companions of the right - what are the companions of the right?...A company of the former peoples. And a company of the later peoples.”

The right hand is associated with good deeds. The companions of the right are the lower level of muslims which are discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

In this divine Hadith, 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 companions of the right - what are the companions of the right?...A company of the former peoples. And a company of the later peoples.”

The right hand is associated with good deeds.

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.

“The companions of the right - what are the companions of the right?...A company of the former peoples. And a company of the later peoples.”

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.

***“The companions of the right - what are the companions of the right?
[They will be] among lote trees with thorns removed. And [banana]
trees layered [with fruit]...And water poured out. And fruit, abundant
[and varied]. [fruits] Neither limited [to season] nor forbidden.”***

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.

Muslims should make it a top priority to act on this righteous deed and strive to feed others especially, the poor on a regular basis. This is an amazing deed which does not require much wealth. Each person should feed others according to their capacity even if it is only half a date fruit as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1417, that this will protect them from the fire of Hell on Judgement Day. This leaves people with no excuse from abstaining from this righteous deed.

***“The companions of the right - what are the companions of the right?
[They will be] among lote trees with thorns removed...And shade
extended...And [upon] beds raised high.”***

Whoever strives in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will relax in the next world. But whoever is lazy in this world will find it difficult in the next.

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.”

***“The companions of the right - what are the companions of the right?
[They will be] among lote trees with thorns removed. And [banana]
trees layered [with fruit]. And shade extended. And water poured out.
And fruit, abundant [and varied]. Neither limited [to season] nor
forbidden. And [upon] beds raised high. Indeed, We have produced
them [i.e., the women of Paradise] in a [new] creation. And made them
virgins. Devoted [to their husbands] and of equal age. For the
companions of the right [who are]. A company of the former peoples.
And a company of the later peoples.”***

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 56 – Al Waqi'ah, Verses 41-56

وَاصْحَبُ الشِّمَالِ مَا أَصْحَبُ الشِّمَالِ ﴿٤١﴾

فِي سَمُومٍ وَحَمِيمٍ ﴿٤٢﴾

وِظِلٍّ مِّنْ يَحْمُومٍ ﴿٤٣﴾

لَّا بَارِدٍ وَلَا كَرِيمٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُتْرَفِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

وَكَانُوا يُصِرُّونَ عَلَى الْحِنثِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٤٦﴾

وَكَانُوا يَقُولُونَ أَيُّدَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا أَءِنَّا
لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

أَوَّءَا بَابًا وَنَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

لَمَجْمُوعُونَ إِلَىٰ مِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ أَيُّهَا الضَّالُّونَ الْمُكْذِبُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

لَأَكِلُونَ مِنْ شَجَرٍ مِّنْ زُقُومٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

فَمَالِئُونَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

فَشْرَبُونَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيمِ ﴿٥٤﴾

فَشْرَبُونَ شُرْبَ أَلْهِيمِ ﴿٥٥﴾

هَذَا نَزْلُهُمْ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿٥٦﴾

“And the companions of the left - what are the companions of the left?”

[They will be] in scorching fire and scalding water.

And a shade of black smoke.

Neither cool nor beneficial.

Indeed they were, before that, indulging in affluence.

And they used to persist in the great violation.

And they used to say, "When we die and become dust and bones, are we indeed to be resurrected?"

And our forefathers [as well]?"

Say, "Indeed, the former and later peoples [will be resurrected].

Are to be gathered together for the appointment of a known Day."

Then indeed you, O those astray [who are] deniers.

Will be eating from trees of zaqqūm.

And filling with it your bellies.

And drinking on top of it from scalding water.

And will drink as the drinking of thirsty camels.

That is their accommodation on the Day of Recompense."

“And the companions of the left - what are the companions of the left?”

As the right hand is connected to good deeds the left hand is connected to sins.

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 companions of the left - what are the companions of the left?”

As the right hand is connected to good deeds the left hand is connected to sins.

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 companions of the left - what are the companions of the left?”

As the right hand is connected to good deeds the left hand is connected to sins.

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 the companions of the left - what are the companions of the left?”

As the right hand is connected to good deeds the left hand is connected to sins.

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 the companions of the left - what are the companions of the left?”

As the right hand is connected to good deeds the left hand is connected to sins.

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 the companions of the left - what are the companions of the left? [They will be] in scorching fire and scalding water. And a shade of black smoke. Neither cool nor beneficial...Then indeed you, O those astray [who are] deniers. Will be eating from trees of zaqqūm. And filling with it your bellies. And drinking on top of it from scalding water. And will drink as the drinking of thirsty camels. That is their accommodation on the Day of Recompense.”

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 companions of the left - what are the companions of the left? [They will be] in scorching fire and scalding water...Indeed they were, before that, indulging in affluence.”

Depending on how one uses their worldly blessings they will either benefit them in both worlds or become a curse 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.

“And the companions of the left - what are the companions of the left? [They will be] in scorching fire and scalding water...Indeed they were, before that, indulging in affluence.”

Depending on how one uses their worldly blessings they will either benefit them in both worlds or become a curse 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.

“And the companions of the left - what are the companions of the left? [They will be] in scorching fire and scalding water...Indeed they were, before that, indulging in affluence.”

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.”

“And the companions of the left - what are the companions of the left? [They will be] in scorching fire and scalding water...Indeed they were, before that, indulging in affluence.”

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 the companions of the left - what are the companions of the left? [They will be] in scorching fire and scalding water...Indeed they were, before that, indulging in affluence.”

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 companions of the left - what are the companions of the left? [They will be] in scorching fire and scalding water...Indeed they were, before that, indulging in affluence.”

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 companions of the left - what are the companions of the left? [They will be] in scorching fire and scalding water...Indeed they were, before that, indulging in affluence.”

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 companions of the left - what are the companions of the left? [They will be] in scorching fire and scalding water...Indeed they were, before that, indulging in affluence. And they used to persist in the great violation.”

This could be referring to polytheism.

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. Whereas, accepting the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, would mean that a person must believe in their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This would force them to lead their life according to the code of conduct of Islam instead of following their own desires. It is this fact that makes people averse towards the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

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 the companions of the left - what are the companions of the left? [They will be] in scorching fire and scalding water...Indeed they were, before that, indulging in affluence. And they used to persist in the great violation.”

This could be referring to polytheism.

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 the companions of the left - what are the companions of the left? [They will be] in scorching fire and scalding water...Indeed they were, before that, indulging in affluence. And they used to persist in the great violation.”

This could be referring to polytheism.

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 companions of the left - what are the companions of the left? [They will be] in scorching fire and scalding water...Indeed they were, before that, indulging in affluence. And they used to persist in the great violation.”

Generally speaking, 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.

“And the companions of the left - what are the companions of the left? [They will be] in scorching fire and scalding water...And they used to say, "When we die and become dust and bones, are we indeed to be resurrected? And our forefathers [as well]?" Say, "Indeed, the former and later peoples. Are to be gathered together for the appointment of a known Day."”

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.

“Say, “Indeed, the former and later peoples. Are to be gathered together for the appointment of a known 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.

“Say, "Indeed, the former and later peoples. Are to be gathered together for the appointment of a known 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.

“Say, "Indeed, the former and later peoples. Are to be gathered together for the appointment of a known 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.

“Say, "Indeed, the former and later peoples. Are to be gathered together for the appointment of a known 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.”

“Say, "Indeed, the former and later peoples. Are to be gathered together for the appointment of a known 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.

Chapter 56 – Al Waqi'ah, Verses 57-62

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ فَلَوْلَا تُصَدِّقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تُمْنُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

ءَأَنْتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

نَحْنُ قَدَرْنَا بَيْنَكُمْ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُبَدِّلَ أَمْثَلَكُمْ وَنُنشِئَكُمْ فِي مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ النَّشْأَةَ الْأُولَىٰ فَلَوْلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

"We have created you, so why do you not believe?"

Have you seen that which you emit [semen]?

Is it you who creates it, or are We the Creator?

We have decreed death among you, and We are not to be outdone.

*In that We will change your likenesses and produce you in that [form] which
you do not know.*

And you have already known the first creation, so will you not remember?"

“We have created you...”

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.”

“We have created you, so why do you 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.

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.

“Have you seen that which you emit?”

Remembering the origins of mankind prevents 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.

“We have created you...We have decreed death among you, and We are not to be outdone.”

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.

“We have decreed death among you, and We are not to be outdone.”

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 have decreed death among you, and We are not to be outdone.”

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 have decreed death among you, and We are not to be outdone.”

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 We are not to be outdone.”

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...”

“We have decreed death among you, and We are not to be outdone. In that We will change your likenesses...”

This could be referring to the grave where the corpse decays and nothing is left except dust and bones.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2460, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a grave is either a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hell. This Hadith further explains that when a successful believer is placed in their grave it widens and becomes comfortable for them whereas, the grave of a sinful person becomes extremely constricted and harmful for them.

It is important to note, that in reality each person takes the garden of Paradise or pit of Hell with them when they depart this world namely, their deeds. If a muslim obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then it will ensure they prepare the deeds required to make their grave a garden of Paradise. But if they disobey Allah, the Exalted, then their sins will create the pit of Hell they will rest in until the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, muslims must act today and not delay in this preparation as the time of death is unknown and often comes suddenly. Delaying to a tomorrow one may not see is foolish and it only leads to regrets. The same way a person spends much energy and time beautifying their home in this world they must strive harder in beautifying their grave as the journey there is inevitable and the stay there long. And if one suffers in their grave then what follows will only be worse. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4267.

“We have created you, so why do you not believe? Have you seen that which you emit [semen]? Is it you who creates it, or are We the Creator? We have decreed death among you, and We are not to be outdone. In that We will change your likenesses and produce you in that [form] which you do not know. And you have already known the first creation, so will you not remember?”

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 56 – Al Waqi'ah, Verses 63-67

أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَحْرُثُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

ءَأَنْتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ ۗ أَمْ نَحْنُ الَّذِينَ نَزْرَعُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ حُطَامًا فَظَلْتُمْ تَفَكَّهُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

إِنَّا لَمُغْرَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

بَلْ نَحْنُ مُحْرَمُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

“And have you seen that [seed] which you sow?

Is it you who makes it grow, or are We the grower?

If We willed, We could make it [dry] debris, and you would remain in wonder.

*[Saying], "Indeed, we have been punished.
Rather, we have been deprived.""*

“And have you seen that [seed] which you sow? Is it you who makes it grow, or are We the grower? If We willed, We could make it [dry] debris, and you would remain in wonder. [Saying], "Indeed, we have been punished. Rather, we have been deprived.””

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 have you seen that [seed] which you sow? Is it you who makes it grow, or are We the grower? If We willed, We could make it [dry] debris, and you would remain in wonder. [Saying], "Indeed, we have been punished. Rather, we have been deprived.””

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.

Chapter 56 – Al Waqi'ah, Verses 68-70

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

ءَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنزِلُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

لَوْ نَشَاءُ جَعَلْنَاهُ أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

“And have you seen the water that you drink?

Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We who bring it down?

If We willed, We could make it bitter, so why are you not grateful?”

“And have you seen the water that you drink? Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We who bring it down? If We willed, We could make it bitter, so why are you not grateful?”

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 have you seen the water that you drink? Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We who bring it down? If We willed, We could make it bitter, so why are you not grateful?”

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.”

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Chapter 56 – Al Waqi'ah, Verses 71-73

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ النَّارَ الَّتِي تُورُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

ءَأَنْتُمْ أَنْشَأْتُمْ شَجَرَتَهَا أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنشِئُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

نَحْنُ جَعَلْنَاهَا تَذْكَرَةً وَرَمْتًا لِلْمُقْوِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾

“And have you seen the fire that you ignite?

Is it you who produced its tree, or are We the producer?

We have made it a reminder and provision for the travelers.”

“And have you seen the fire that you ignite? Is it you who produced its tree, or are We the producer?...and provision for the travelers [who produce campsite fires].”

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 have you seen the fire that you ignite?...We have made it a reminder [of Hell]...”

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 have you seen the fire that you ignite?...We have made it a reminder [of Hell]...”

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by 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 have you seen the fire that you ignite?...We have made it a reminder [of Hell]...”

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by 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.

“And have you seen the fire that you ignite?...We have made it a reminder [of Hell]...”

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 provision for the travelers.”

This verse hints at the fact that all people are travellers in this world. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised his Companion Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to live in this world as a stranger or a traveller. And Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, used to advise that when a person reaches the evening they should not expect to be alive in the morning. And if they reach the morning they should not expect to be alive in the evening. And that a muslim must make use of their good health before they encounter sickness and make good use of their life before their death.

This Hadith teaches muslims to limit their hope for a long life which is the main cause of failing to prepare for the hereafter while dedicating one's complete effort to the material world as it convinces a muslim they have plenty of time to prepare for the hereafter. In addition, a muslim should not treat this temporary world as their permanent home. Instead, they should behave as someone who is about to depart it, never to return. This would inspire one to dedicate the majority of their efforts in preparing for their final destination namely, the hereafter, and to limit their efforts in obtaining the material world which is beyond their need and responsibilities. This concept has been discussed throughout the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for example chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 39:

“...this worldly life is only [temporary] enjoyment, and indeed, the Hereafter - that is the home of [permanent] settlement.”

In a similar Hadith to the main one under discussion which is found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2377, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described himself in this world as a rider who takes a short rest under the shade of a tree and then swiftly moves on. In order to indicate the temporal nature of this world the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, compared it to shade which, as everyone knows, does not last long even though it appears to be permanent. This is how the material world can appear to some. They behave as if the world will last forever whereas in reality it will quickly fade away.

In addition, this Hadith mentions a rider and not someone who is walking. This is because a rider would rest significantly less than someone journeying on foot. This further indicates that a person's stay in this world is very short. This is quite evident to all. Even those who reach elderly age admit they life went by in a flash. So in reality, whether one reaches old age or not life is just a moment. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

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

In reality, the material world is like a bridge which must be crossed and not taken as a permanent home. The same way a person does not take a bus station as their home knowing they stay there will only be for a short while similarly, the world is a short stop before one reaches the eternal hereafter.

When someone goes on a once in a lifetime holiday, in most cases, they will limit their spending on luxury household items, such as a wide screen television and instead make do with whatever services their hotel offers. They behave in this manner as they understand their stay in the hotel will be short and soon they will leave never to return. This mentality prevents them from taking the holiday destination as their permanent home. Similarly, people were sent to Earth for a purpose which is definitely not to make it their permanent home. Instead, they were sent to take provisions from it so that they can safely reach their permanent home meaning, the hereafter.

Whenever a person intends to travel they first acquire the provision they need in order to make the journey comfortable and successful. As indicated in the Holy Quran the best provision for the hereafter is piety. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 197:

“...indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah...”

This is when a muslim fulfils the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience believing He only chooses what is best for His servants. Other provisions, such as food, are required in order to complete the journey from the world to the hereafter. But the provision which should be prioritised is piety as it is the only provision which will benefit someone in both this world and the next. Whereas, all the other types of provision, such as food, wealth and housing, will only benefit someone in this world unless, it is dedicated towards the hereafter, such as donating charity, but this in fact is a part of piety.

As the material world is not the permanent home of a person they should therefore act on the main Hadith under discussion and either live as if they were a stranger or a traveller.

The first state of being a stranger is someone who does not attach their heart and mind to their temporary home. Their only aim is to gather enough supplies so that they can return safely to their permanent home namely, the hereafter. This is like the one who lives in a foreign country on a work visa. Their place of work is not their home; only a place to earn money so that they can return back to their homeland with it. This person will never treat the strange country as their home. Instead, they only spend on necessary things and concentrate on saving their wealth so that they can take as much wealth as possible back to their real and permanent home. If this person spent all or the majority of their wealth in the foreign country and returned to their home country empty handed they would undoubtedly be considered blameworthy by their relatives. This is because they have failed in their mission and purpose of living in another country on a work visa. Similarly, a muslim should dedicate the majority of their effort in acquiring

provisions to take to the hereafter. They should not compete for the luxuries of the material world with others. Instead, they must concentrate on their mission to acquire provisions for the eternal hereafter. If they dedicate too much effort in beautifying their temporary home then they will enter the hereafter unprepared and empty handed and therefore, fail in their mission which Allah, the Exalted, entrusted them with. A muslim should be honest with themselves and reflect on how many hours of the day they dedicate each to the material world and preparing for the hereafter. This self-reflection will show them if they have the correct mentality or not and how strong their faith in the hereafter really is. Chapter 87 Al A'la, verses 16-17:

“But you prefer the worldly life. While the Hereafter is better and more enduring.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was sent to mankind when they were the most lowly of people and the vast majority of them were leading a sinful life which would have caused them to enter Hell. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, called them towards the path of truth with clear proofs. Many of these people accepted his clear message and followed him. He promised them that Islam would conquer many nations and much wealth would be obtained by the muslims. But he warned them not to become distracted by the luxuries of the material world. An example of this warning is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that competing for the unnecessary luxuries of the material world would destroy people. Therefore, he advised muslims to content themselves with the basic necessities in order to fulfil their responsibilities and needs and instead concentrate on preparing for the

hereafter. Everything the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, promised muslims came true. When the world was opened to the muslims the majority of them became busy with competing, collecting, hoarding and enjoying the excess of the material world. Thus, they gave up preparing for the hereafter correctly as they were told to by the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. Only a few accepted his advice and only took what they needed from the material world in order to fulfil their needs and responsibilities and dedicated the majority of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter. This small party, meaning the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors, caught up with the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in the hereafter as they practically followed his advice and footsteps. On the other hand, the majority continued in their heedlessness chasing the material world until death caught them unprepared.

The second mentality muslims should adopt as advised in the main Hadith under discussion is that of a traveller. This person does not observe this material world as their home and instead journeys towards their true home meaning, the hereafter. This mentality is similar to a back packer who may sleep over in different cities but never regards them as their home. The only provision they take with them is what they can carry meaning, the essentials. This includes the things they need to survive and will help them reach their destination safely. A back packer would never pack unnecessary items knowing that these things will only be a burden for them. Nor will they fail to pack the essentials needed to complete their journey safely. Similarly, an intelligent muslim only collects the deeds from this material world, in respect to actions and speech, which will help them reach the hereafter safely. They will turn away from all actions and speech which will become a burden for them in both this world and the next. This is the attitude the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to adopt in

a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4104. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 7-8:

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed. And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground.”

A muslim must understand that the day and night are only brief stages in which people travel through, stage by stage, until they reach the hereafter. Therefore, they should use each stage by sending ahead provision to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds. They must constantly be aware the journey will end very soon and they will reach the hereafter. Even if the journey looks long it will ultimately feel like a moment so one should make it a moment of obedience before it ends while they are unprepared. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

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

With every breath one takes they are moving towards the hereafter while leaving the world behind. Even though, one may seem not to be moving but in reality, the day and night act as their conveyance which takes them swiftly, without pause, to the next world.

Muslims must realise that as they are the servants of Allah, the Exalted, soon a day will come when they will return to Him. When they return they will be stopped for questioning. Therefore, they should prepare something good for this interrogation. They should fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. But if they continue in heedlessness and fail to prepare then they will be taken to task for what has already occurred and for what remains.

Moving on to the advice of the Companion Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion. The first part of it highlights the importance of shortening one's hope for a long life in this world. A muslim should not believe they stay in this world is long as they could pass away at any moment. Even if one lives for many years life still seems to have gone by in a flash. This is what Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, indicated by advising muslims not to believe they will be alive in the morning if they reach the evening. This mentality is the root cause of only taking what one needs from the material world in order to fulfil their worldly responsibilities and prepare for the hereafter. Whereas, having hopes for a long life is the root cause of the opposite meaning, it causes one to delay preparing for the hereafter by performing righteous deeds and refraining from sins and it encourages them to collect and hoard the material world believing their stay in it will be extremely long.

In addition, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised muslims to make good use of their good health before they encounter sickness. Unfortunately, most people only appreciate the value of good health after they lose it, which has been warned in a Hadith found

in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412. Making use of good health means that a muslim should use their physical and mental strength in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by performing righteous deeds and refraining from sins before they reach a time when they might desire to perform good deeds but can no longer do them due to poor health. The one who makes good use of their good health will be given the reward of the righteous deeds they performed during their good health even when they encounter sickness and can no longer do them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2996. Whereas, the one who does not make good use of their good health will lose this potential reward when they become sick. In fact, they will be left with nothing except regret.

The final part of the advice given by Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, is that a person should make good use of their life before death. This includes making use of all things which lead to righteous deeds, such as wealth, and avoiding all those things which prevent one from doing good deeds, such as unnecessary preoccupations. It is important for muslims to make good use of their time before they become distracted with responsibilities which naturally occur with the passing of time, such as marriage. And to make good use of their wealth before their financial responsibilities increase.

As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2403, all people will have regrets at the time of their death. The good doer will regret that they did not perform more good deeds before dying. The sinful person will regret that they did not sincerely repent before their death. In this world people are often given second chances for example, redoing a driving test, but there is no do over once a person dies. Regret will not help them at all.

Instead, it will only add to their pain and suffering. So muslims must use the time they are given to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, before their moment ends by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. One should abandon the mentality of delaying things till tomorrow as in most cases this tomorrow never comes. A muslim should concentrate on today and therefore, do the things which please Allah, the Exalted, as tomorrow may come in this world but they may not be alive to witness it.

Chapter 56 – Al Waqi'ah, Verse 74



فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

“So exalt the name of your Lord, the Most Great.”

“So exalt the name 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.

“So exalt the name of your Lord...”

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.

“...your Lord, 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.”

Chapter 56 – Al Waqi'ah, Verses 75-82

﴿ ٧٥ ﴾ فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَوْقِعِ النُّجُومِ ﴿ ٧٥ ﴾

﴿ ٧٦ ﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لَّو تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ ﴿ ٧٦ ﴾

﴿ ٧٧ ﴾ إِنَّهُ لَقُرْءَانٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿ ٧٧ ﴾

﴿ ٧٨ ﴾ فِي كِتَابٍ مَّكْنُونٍ ﴿ ٧٨ ﴾

﴿ ٧٩ ﴾ لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ ﴿ ٧٩ ﴾

تَنْزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

أَفَبِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَنْتُمْ مُدْهِنُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

وَتَجْعَلُونَ رِزْقَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ تُكذِّبُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

“Then I swear by the setting of the stars.

And indeed, it is an oath - if you could know - [most] great.

Indeed, it is a noble Quran.

In a Register well-protected [the Preserved Tablet].

None touch it except the purified.

[It is] a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.

Then is it to this statement that you are indifferent.

And make [the thanks for] your provision that you deny [the Provider]?”

“Then I swear by the setting of the stars. And indeed, it is an oath - if you could know - [most] great. Indeed, it is a noble Quran. In a Register well-protected [the Preserved Tablet]. None touch it except the purified. [It is] a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.”

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 I swear by the setting of the stars. And indeed, it is an oath - if you could know - [most] great. Indeed, it is a noble Quran. In a Register well-protected [the Preserved Tablet]. None touch it except the purified. [It is] a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.”

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?"

“Then I swear by the setting of the stars. And indeed, it is an oath - if you could know - [most] great. Indeed, it is a noble Quran. In a Register well-protected [the Preserved Tablet]. None touch it except the purified. [It is] a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. Then is it to this statement that you are indifferent. And make [the thanks for] your provision that you deny [the Provider]?”

The one who believes in the Holy Quran must fulfil its rights and not ignore it. As indicated by the final verse under discussion, behaving in this manner is ingratitude to Allah, the Exalted.

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] a revelation from the 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...”

"[It is] a revelation from 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 make [the thanks for] your provision that you deny [the Provider]?”

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 make [the thanks for] your provision that you deny [the Provider]?”

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.

Chapter 56 – Al Waqi'ah, Verses 83-87

فَلَوْلَا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُقُومَ ﴿٨٣﴾

وَأَنْتُمْ حِينِيذٍ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

فَلَوْلَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

تَرْجِعُونَهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

“Then why, when it [i.e., the soul at death] reaches the throat.

And you are at that time looking on.

And We are nearer to him than you, but you do not see.

Then why do you not [prevent death], if you are not to be recompensed.

Bring it [the soul] back, if you should be truthful?"

“Then why, when it [i.e., the soul at death] reaches the throat.”

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 why, when it [i.e., the soul at death] reaches the throat.”

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 why, when it [i.e., the soul at death] reaches the throat.”

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 why, when it [i.e., the soul at death] reaches the throat. And you [others] are at that time looking on.”

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 why, when it [i.e., the soul at death] reaches the throat. And you [others] are at that time looking on.”

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 why, when it [i.e., the soul at death] reaches the throat. And you are at that time looking on. And We are nearer to him than you, but you do not see. Then why do you not, if you are not to be recompensed. Bring it back, if you should be truthful?”

Just like a person has no power to avoid death they have no power to avoid their accountability on the Day of Judgement.

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.

“Then why, when it [i.e., the soul at death] reaches the throat. And you are at that time looking on. And We are nearer to him than you, but you do not see. Then why do you not, if you are not to be recompensed. Bring it back, if you should be truthful?”

Just like a person has no power to avoid death they have no power to avoid their accountability on the Day of Judgement. Therefore, one must practically prepare for this inevitable event by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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

So if a Muslim desires all their worldly possessions to become a blessing for them in both worlds all they have to do is use them correctly according to the teachings found in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they use them incorrectly then the same blessing will become a burden and curse for them in both worlds. It is as simple as that.

“Then why, when it [i.e., the soul at death] reaches the throat. And you are at that time looking on. And We are nearer to him than you, but you do not see. Then why do you not, if you are not to be recompensed. Bring it back, if you should be truthful?”

Just like a person has no power to avoid death they have no power to avoid their accountability on the Day of Judgement. Therefore, one must practically prepare for this inevitable event 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 56 – Al Waqi'ah, Verses 88-95

فَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾

فَرَوْحٌ وَرِيحَانٌ وَجَنَّتْ نَعِيمٌ ﴿٨٩﴾

وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٩٠﴾

فَسَلَّمَ لَكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٩١﴾

وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٩٢﴾

فَنَزَّلُ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ ﴿٩٣﴾

٩٤ وَتَصَلِيَةٌ جَحِيمٍ

٩٥ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ

“And if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allah].

Then [for him is] rest and bounty and a garden of pleasure.

And if he was of the companions of the right.

Then Peace for you; [you are] from the companions of the right.

But if he was of the deniers [who were] astray.

Then [for him is] accommodation of scalding water.

And burning in Hellfire.

Indeed, this is the true certainty.”

“And if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allah]...And if he was of the companions of the right...”

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 if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allah]...And if he was of the companions of the right...”

Muslims can be split into three groups. The first group are the best and consist of the muslims who hand their lives and possessions over to Allah, the Exalted, thereby fulfilling the purpose of their creation. They only take from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities and dedicate the rest of their efforts in gaining and acting on knowledge so that they can strengthen their faith and gain the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Outwardly they may seem as if they do not enjoy life in this world but in reality they obtain more peace in it than the other types of muslims. Their reckoning on Judgment Day will be easy through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

The second group consists of those muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties and whatever traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they come across without putting extra effort in obtaining or acting on Islamic knowledge. They dedicate the majority of their efforts to gaining and enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. As they avoid the unlawful it is hoped they will gain the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in the next world. But as they indulged in the material world their accountability will be long. And as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6536, whoever has their deeds scrutinised will be punished. Standing and witnessing the horrors of the Day of Judgment for an extremely long time because of one's enjoyment in the world is a form of punishment.

The final group of muslims are the worse type as they do not dedicate their lives to Allah, the Exalted, like the best group but neither do they enjoy the lawful pleasures of the material world like the second group. These people instead hoard the worldly things they obtain without fulfilling their lawful desires. This attitude causes them to stand between the two other groups meaning, they will not enjoy the lawful things of this world nor will they have an easy reckoning on the Day of Judgment because of the worldly things they obtained.

It is therefore important for muslims not to belong to this final group as this is a clear loss. A muslim should try to belong to the best group but if they really cannot manage this then they should at least join the second group by fulfilling their obligatory duties, enjoy only the lawful pleasures of this world and hope for the forgiveness and mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

“And if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allah].”

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.

***“And if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allah].
Then [for him is] rest...”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2460, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a grave is either a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hell. This Hadith further explains that when a successful believer is placed in their grave it widens and becomes comfortable for them whereas, the grave of a sinful person becomes extremely constricted and harmful for them.

It is important to note, that in reality each person takes the garden of Paradise or pit of Hell with them when they depart this world namely, their deeds. If a muslim obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then it will ensure they prepare the deeds required to make their grave a garden of Paradise. But if they disobey Allah, the Exalted, then their sins will create the pit of Hell they will rest in until the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, muslims must act today and not delay in this preparation as the time of death is unknown and often comes suddenly. Delaying to a tomorrow one may not see is foolish and it only leads to regrets. The same way a person spends much energy and time beautifying their home in this world they must strive harder in beautifying their grave as the journey there is inevitable and the stay there long. And if one suffers in their grave then

what follows will only be worse. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4267.

***“And if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allah].
Then [for him is] rest...”***

It is important to understand that even though people strive in this material world in order to achieve peace of mind it is not possible to achieve in this world as it has not been placed in the material world. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”

Even though this fact eludes many it is quite obvious that the more one strives in this material world the more doors they open to the material world. Fulfilling one worldly task leads to ten others. So a person moves from one preoccupation to another with the no end in sight until they depart this world. The only way to obtain some peace in this world is through the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This muslim will be granted peace of mind by Allah, the Exalted. But even then it is important to understand that true lasting peace of mind is only found in the hereafter. This is because no matter how good someone's life is even if they reach a point where they have no worldly or religious responsibilities as they have discharged them all and they have no other things to deal with even then, the reality of death, the grave and Judgment Day will prevent them from obtaining true lasting peace. Therefore, a muslim should understand this reality as it helps one to remain patient when dealing with life and what it brings and it encourages a muslim to strive in preparation for the hereafter

so that they can achieve true lasting peace by obtaining the gardens of refuge and an eternal resting place.

***“And if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allah].
Then [for him is] rest...”***

This indicates that as those brought near strived hardest in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, during their life on Earth, they will be blessed with a special rest in the hereafter.

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 if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allah].
Then [for him is] rest and bounty and a garden of pleasure.”***

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 if he [the deceased] was of the companions of the right. Then [the angels will say], "Peace for you; [you are] from the companions of the right.””

If one desires to hear this greeting in the next world then they must 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.

“But if he [the deceased] was of the deniers [who were] astray. Then [for him is] accommodation of scalding water. And burning in Hellfire.”

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 if he [the deceased] was of the deniers [who were] astray. Then [for him is] accommodation of scalding water. And burning in Hellfire.”

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 if he [the deceased] was of the deniers [who were] astray. Then [for him is] accommodation of scalding water. And burning in Hellfire.”

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 if he [the deceased] was of the deniers [who were] astray. Then [for him is] accommodation of scalding water. And burning in Hellfire.”

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 if he [the deceased] was of the deniers [who were] astray. Then [for him is] accommodation of scalding water. And burning in Hellfire.”

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 if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allah]. Then [for him is] rest and bounty and a garden of pleasure. And if he was of the companions of the right. Then Peace for you; [you are] from the companions of the right. But if he was of the deniers [who were] astray. Then [for him is] accommodation of scalding water. And burning in Hellfire. Indeed, this is the true certainty.”

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by this certain and inevitable reality.

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 if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allah]. Then [for him is] rest and bounty and a garden of pleasure. And if he was of the companions of the right. Then Peace for you; [you are] from the companions of the right. But if he was of the deniers [who were] astray. Then [for him is] accommodation of scalding water. And burning in Hellfire. Indeed, this is the true certainty.”

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by this certain and inevitable reality. This can lead to other negative characteristics which prevent one from adequately preparing for the Day of Judgement, such as 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.”

“And if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allah]. Then [for him is] rest and bounty and a garden of pleasure. And if he was of the companions of the right. Then Peace for you; [you are] from the companions of the right. But if he was of the deniers [who were] astray. Then [for him is] accommodation of scalding water. And burning in Hellfire. Indeed, this is the true certainty.”

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by this certain and inevitable reality. One must avoid this by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they 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 if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allah]. Then [for him is] rest and bounty and a garden of pleasure. And if he was of the companions of the right. Then Peace for you; [you are] from the companions of the right. But if he was of the deniers [who were] astray. Then [for him is] accommodation of scalding water. And burning in Hellfire. Indeed, this is the true certainty.”

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by this certain and inevitable reality. One must avoid this by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they obtain certainty of faith. This will encourage them to practically prepare for the Day of 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 if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allah]. Then [for him is] rest and bounty and a garden of pleasure. And if he was of the companions of the right. Then Peace for you; [you are] from the companions of the right. But if he was of the deniers [who were] astray. Then [for him is] accommodation of scalding water. And burning in Hellfire. Indeed, this is the true certainty.”

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by this certain and inevitable reality. One must avoid this by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they obtain certainty of faith. This will encourage them to practically prepare for the Day of 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 56 – Al Waqi'ah, Verse 96 of 96

٩٦ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

“So exalt the name of your Lord, the Most Great.”

“So exalt the name 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.

“So exalt the name of your Lord...”

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.

“...your Lord, 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.”

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 57 – Al Hadid, Verse 1

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١﴾

*“Whatever is in the heavens and earth exalts Allah, and He is the Exalted in
Might, the Wise.”*

“Whatever is in the heavens and earth exalts Allah...”

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.

“Whatever is in the heavens and earth exalts Allah...”

This includes those who are unwilling as their exalting Allah, the Exalted, includes the fact that they are powerless in the face of 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 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.

“...and 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 57 – Al Hadid, Verse 2

لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ



“His is the dominion of the heavens and earth. He gives life and causes death, and He is over all things competent.”

“His is the dominion of the heavens and 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 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.

“...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...”

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?

“...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.

“...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 57 – Al Hadid, Verse 3

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ



“He is the First and the Last, the Apparent and the Hidden, and He is, of all things, Knowing.”

“He is the First and the Last...”

Allah, the Exalted, existed eternally before He created the creation and will continue to exist without any end.

The one who understands this divine name will often remember their mortality meaning, their death. This will inspire them to prepare for it and the hereafter instead of remaining heedless to it. This preparation involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

A muslim must act on this divine name by prioritising the actions which will endure through the grace of Allah, the Exalted, namely, righteous deeds, over the worldly actions which will perish with this world. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3681, that a muslim will continue to receive the reward for any type of on-going charity they have done even after their death. This is a type of charity where the creation continues to benefit from it, such as a water pump. Simply put if a muslim directs their actions and efforts towards the material world they will perish yet, they will still be held accountable for them in the next world. Whereas, the one who directs their efforts and actions towards Allah, the Exalted, will find that their deeds endure and they will benefit them in every step of their journey to the hereafter, such as their grave. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 96:

“Whatever you have will end, but what Allah has is lasting...”

“He is the First and the Last...”

Allah, the Exalted, existed eternally before He created the creation and will continue to exist without any end. The Last indicates that when the creation dies before the Day of Resurrection, Allah, the Exalted, will continue to exist as He ever was and will be.

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.

“He is the...Apparent...”

The divine attributes of Allah, the Exalted, are apparent within the Heavens and the Earth. Reflecting on the creation will guide one to Allah, the Exalted, through His attributes.

For example, 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 is the...Apparent...”

The divine attributes of Allah, the Exalted, are apparent within the Heavens and the Earth. Reflecting on the creation will guide one to Allah, the Exalted, through His attributes.

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.

“He is the...Hidden...”

The power and will of Allah, the Exalted, are often hidden within His decrees.

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.

“He is the...Hidden...”

The power and will of Allah, the Exalted, are often hidden within His decrees.

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.

“He is the...Hidden...”

The power and will of Allah, the Exalted, are often hidden within His decrees.

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.

“He is the...Hidden...”

The power and will of Allah, the Exalted, are often hidden within His decrees.

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.

“He is the...Apparent and the Hidden...”

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 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 57 – Al Hadid, Verse 4

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ
أَسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلْبِغُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا
وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا
كُنْتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ



“It is He who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne. He knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges from it and what descends from the heaven and what ascends therein; and He is with you wherever you are. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing.”

“It is He who created the heavens and earth 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 then established Himself above the Throne...”

Some have debated for many generations what this verse means. But it is best not to dive into this as this is one of the things which are beyond the comprehension of the creation. Muslims only need to believe in what has been said. More than this will not be asked about on Judgement Day, otherwise the Muslim nation would have been informed of this. So spending countless hours arguing, debating and publishing books discussing this issue does not make sense. Muslims should instead concentrate more on the things which when clarified will increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and concentrate on those things which will be questioned about on Judgement Day, such as fulfilling the rights of people. Unfortunately, arguing and debating over these types of issues has distracted Muslims from concentrating on more important things and issues and this is one of the reasons why the general strength of the Muslim nation has declined over time.

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

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

“...and then established Himself above the Throne...”

The exact nature of this verse is unknown.

Generally speaking, 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 then established Himself above the Throne...”

The exact nature of this verse is unknown.

Generally speaking, 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 knows what penetrates into the earth [seeds] and what emerges from it [crops]...”

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 knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges from it...”

This could also mean that Allah, the Exalted, already knows the exact location of every person's grave and when and how they will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement. The past tense indicates the certainty of these events occurring.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2460, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a grave is either a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hell. This Hadith further explains that when a successful believer is placed in their grave it widens and becomes comfortable for them whereas, the grave of a sinful person becomes extremely constricted and harmful for them.

It is important to note, that in reality each person takes the garden of Paradise or pit of Hell with them when they depart this world namely, their deeds. If a muslim obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then it will ensure they prepare the deeds required to make their grave a garden of Paradise. But if they disobey Allah, the Exalted, then their sins will create the pit of Hell they will rest in until the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, muslims must act today and not delay in this preparation as the time of death is unknown and often comes suddenly. Delaying to a tomorrow one may not see is foolish and it only leads to regrets. The same way a person spends much energy and time beautifying their home in this world they must strive harder in beautifying their grave as the journey there is inevitable and the stay there long. And if one suffers in their grave then what follows will only be worse. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4267.

“...He knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges from it...”

This could also mean that Allah, the Exalted, already knows the exact location of every person's grave and when and how they will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement. The past tense indicates the certainty of these events occurring.

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.

“...He knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges from it...”

This could also mean that Allah, the Exalted, already knows the exact location of every person's grave and when and how they will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement. The past tense indicates the certainty of these events occurring.

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.

“...He knows what...descends from the heaven...”

The most important thing that descends is divine revelation.

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.

“...He knows what... what ascends therein [to Heaven]...”

The deeds of people ascend towards the Heavens. This has been confirmed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3255.

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.”

“...He knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges from it and what descends from the heaven and what ascends therein...”

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 He is with you wherever you are...”

Muslims must strive to obtain the special company of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to peace and success in both worlds.

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 He is with you wherever you are. And Allāh, of what you do, is 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 He is with you wherever you are. And Allāh, of what you do, is 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 57 – Al Hadid, Verse 5

لَهُ، مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٥﴾

“His is the dominion of the heavens and earth. And to Allah are returned [all] matters.”

“His is the dominion of the heavens and 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.”

“His is the dominion of the heavens and earth. And to Allāh are returned [all] matters.”

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 to Allāh are returned [all] matters.”

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 to Allāh are returned [all] matters.”

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 57 – Al Hadid, Verse 6

يُؤَلِّجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُؤَلِّجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَهُوَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ
الصُّدُورِ ٦

*“He causes the night to enter the day and causes the day to enter the night,
and He is Knowing of that within the breasts.”*

“He causes the night to enter the day and causes the day to enter the night...”

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 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 57 – Al Hadid, Verses 7-8

ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا جَعَلَكُمْ مُسْتَخْلَفِينَ فِيهِ
فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَأَنْفَقُوا لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿٧﴾

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ يَدْعُوكُمْ لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ
وَقَدْ أَخَذَ مِيثَاقَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨﴾

“Believe in Allah and His Messenger and spend out of that in which He has made you successive inheritors. For those who have believed among you and spent, there will be a great reward.

And why do you not believe in Allah while the Messenger invites you to believe in your Lord and He has taken your covenant, if you should [truly] be believers?”

“Believe 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.

“Believe in Allah...And why do you not believe in Allah...and He has taken your covenant, if you should [truly] be believers?”

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...”

“...spend out of that in which He has made you successive inheritors...”

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.

“...spend out of that in which He has made you successive inheritors...”

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.

“...spend out of that in which He has made you successive inheritors...”

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.

“...spend out of that in which He has made you successive inheritors...”

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.

“...spend out of that in which He has made you successive inheritors...”

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.

“...For those who have believed among you and spent, there will be a great reward.”

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.

“...For those who have believed among you and spent, there will be a great reward. And why do you not believe in Allāh while the Messenger invites you to believe in your Lord and He has taken your covenant, if you should [truly] be 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.

“Believe in Allāh and His Messenger and spend out of that in which He has made you successive inheritors. For those who have believed among you and spent, there will be a great reward.”

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.

“Believe in Allāh and His Messenger and spend out of that in which He has made you successive inheritors. For those who have believed among you and spent, there will be 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.

“Believe in Allāh and His Messenger and spend out of that in which He has made you successive inheritors. For those who have believed among you and spent, there will be 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.

“...while the Messenger invites you to believe in your Lord...”

The essence of this 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.

“...while the Messenger invites you to believe in your Lord...”

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.

“...while the Messenger invites you to believe in your Lord...”

This responsibility has now fallen to the muslim nation.

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.

Chapter 57 – Al Hadid, Verse 9

هُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لِّيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ
الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٩﴾

“It is He who sends down upon His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] verses of clear evidence that He may bring you out from darkneses into the light. And indeed, Allah is to you Kind and Merciful.”

“It is He who sends down upon His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...”

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 Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with it. This has been indicated in 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.”

“It is He who sends down upon His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] verses of clear evidence...”

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.”

“It is He who sends down upon His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] verses of clear evidence...”

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by the clear evidences 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 is He who sends down upon His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] verses of clear evidence...”

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by the clear evidences of Allah, the Exalted. One must avoid this by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they 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...”

“It is He who sends down upon His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] verses of clear evidence that He may bring you out from darkneses into the light...”

One will gain this benefit when they sincerely obey and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what was revealed to him namely, the Holy Quran.

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.

“It is He who sends down upon His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] verses of clear evidence that He may bring you out from darkneses into the light...”

One will gain this benefit when they sincerely obey and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what was revealed to him 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.

“It is He who sends down upon His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] verses of clear evidence that He may bring you out from darkneses into the light...”

One will gain this benefit when they sincerely obey and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what was revealed to him namely, the Holy Quran.

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 sends down upon His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] verses of clear evidence that He may bring you out from darkneses into the light...”

One will gain this benefit when they sincerely obey and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what was revealed to him 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.

“It is He who sends down upon His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] verses of clear evidence that He may bring you out from darkneses into the light...”

One will gain this benefit when they sincerely obey and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what was revealed to him namely, 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.

“It is He who sends down upon His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] verses of clear evidence that He may bring you out from darkneses into the light...”

One will gain this benefit when they sincerely obey and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what was revealed to him namely, 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.

“It is He who sends down upon His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] verses of clear evidence that He may bring you out from darkneses into the light...”

One will gain this benefit when they sincerely obey and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what was revealed to him namely, 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.

“...And indeed, Allāh is to you Kind and 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 57 – Al Hadid, Verse 10

وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تُنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ لَا يَسْتَوِي مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَنْفَقَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقَتْلَ
أُولِيكَ أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ وَقَاتَلُوا وَكَلَّا
وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحَسَنَىٰ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٠﴾

“And why do you not spend in the cause of Allah while to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth? Not equal among you are those who spent before the conquest [of Makkah] and fought [and those who did so after it]. Those are greater in degree than they who spent afterwards and fought. But to all Allah has promised the best [reward]. And Allah, of what you do, is Aware.”

“And why do you not spend in the cause of Allah while to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth?...”

This verse indicates the importance of understanding that one benefits only themselves when they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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 why do you not spend in the cause of Allah while to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth?...”

This verse indicates the importance of understanding that one benefits only themselves when they 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.

“And why do you not spend in the cause of Allah while to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth?...”

This verse indicates the importance of understanding that one benefits only themselves when they 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.

“And why do you not spend in the cause of Allah while to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth?...”

This also means that when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, He will grant them more. This is how one shows gratitude to Allah, the Exalted.

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 why do you not spend in the cause of Allah while to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth?...”

This also means that when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, He will ensure they do not suffer any loss.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that charity does not decrease one's wealth.

This is because whatever a muslim spends for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to any blessing, such as time, Allah, the Exalted, will compensate them. This compensation will be much more than what they originally used. 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?...”

For example, Allah, the Exalted, may grant the one who spends for His sake with financial opportunities which leads to an overall increase in wealth. In addition, this could be referring to the reality that whatever is destined to be spent on a person, which is their true wealth, can never change irrespective of their behaviour or the behaviour of the entire

creation. In fact, a person's provision was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. So in reality, one's charity will not change the amount of wealth which is destined to be spent on them, such as wealth spent on their food.

“And why do you not spend in the cause of Allah while to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth?...”

This also means that one should use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, before they leave them behind when they die.

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.

“And why do you not spend in the cause of Allah while to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth?...”

This also means that one should use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, before they leave them behind when they die.

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.

“And why do you not spend in the cause of Allah while to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth?...”

Allah, the Exalted, will inherit everything on Earth and all those upon it as in reality everything was created and belongs to none other than Him.

A muslim who understands this divine name will not attach to anything in the material world and instead use everything they have been granted in order to gain the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. If muslims use the things they possess according to their desires such as their wealth they will become a burden for them in both worlds and they will ultimately lose the things during their life or when they die. But if they use them in the correct way they will become a blessing for them in both worlds.

A muslim must act on this divine name by striving to become an inheritor of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which is achieved by learning and acting on the knowledge found within Islam. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223. This inheritance will endure as it is connected to Allah, the Exalted, whereas all worldly inheritance will perish.

“...while to Allah belongs the heritage 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.”

“...Not equal among you are those who spent before the conquest [of Makkah] and fought [and those who did so after it]. Those are greater in degree than they who spent afterwards and fought. But to all Allāh has promised the best [reward]...”

This verse indicates that superiority lies in facing times of difficulties while remaining 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.

“...Not equal among you are those who spent before the conquest [of Makkah] and fought [and those who did so after it]. Those are greater in degree than they who spent afterwards and fought. But to all Allāh has promised the best [reward]...”

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.

“...Not equal among you are those who spent before the conquest [of Makkah] and fought [and those who did so after it]. Those are greater in degree than they who spent afterwards and fought. But to all Allāh has promised the best [reward]...”

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.

“...Not equal among you are those who spent before the conquest [of Makkah] and fought [and those who did so after it]. Those are greater in degree than they who spent afterwards and fought. But to all Allāh has promised the best [reward]...”

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4168, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the strong believer is more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, than a weaker believer. This does not necessarily refer to physical strength which one uses to perform righteous deeds. But it also refers to knowledge and acting on it. When one acts on their knowledge it leads to certainty of faith. The one who possesses strong faith will fulfil their duties according to their knowledge and not blind imitation like the weak believer. A weak believer believes something based on hearsay like if they were told a person is inside their house whereas the strong believer believes and acts based on knowledge for example, if they saw the person inside their house through a window. The stronger one's faith the greater their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This in turn increases their success in both worlds. 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...”

“...Not equal among you are those who spent before the conquest [of Makkah] and fought [and those who did so after it]. Those are greater in degree than they who spent afterwards and fought. But to all Allāh has promised the best [reward]...”

Generally speaking, Muslims can be split into three groups. The first group are the best and consist of the muslims who hand their lives and possessions over to Allah, the Exalted, thereby fulfilling the purpose of their creation. They only take from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities and dedicate the rest of their efforts in gaining and acting on knowledge so that they can strengthen their faith and gain the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Outwardly they may seem as if they do not enjoy life in this world but in reality they obtain more peace in it than the other types of muslims. Their reckoning on Judgment Day will be easy through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

The second group consists of those muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties and whatever traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they come across without putting extra effort in obtaining or acting on Islamic knowledge. They dedicate the majority of their efforts to gaining and enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. As they avoid the unlawful it is hoped they will gain the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in the next world. But as they indulged in the material world their accountability will be long. And as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6536, whoever has their deeds scrutinised will be punished. Standing and witnessing the horrors of the Day of Judgment for an extremely long time because of one's enjoyment in the world is a form of punishment.

The final group of muslims are the worse type as they do not dedicate their lives to Allah, the Exalted, like the best group but neither do they enjoy the lawful pleasures of the material world like the second group. These people instead hoard the worldly things they obtain without fulfilling their lawful desires. This attitude causes them to stand between the two other groups meaning, they will not enjoy the lawful things of this world nor will they have an easy reckoning on the Day of Judgment because of the worldly things they obtained.

It is therefore important for muslims not to belong to this final group as this is a clear loss. A muslim should try to belong to the best group but if they really cannot manage this then they should at least join the second group by fulfilling their obligatory duties, enjoy only the lawful pleasures of this world and hope for the forgiveness and mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

“...But to all Allāh has promised the best [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 Allāh, of what you do, 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 57 – Al Hadid, Verse 11

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضْعِفُهُ لَهُ، وَلَهُ أَجْرٌ
كَرِيمٌ

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He will multiply it for him
and he will have a noble reward?”*

“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 order to make this transaction appealing it has been phrased in this way. In reality, every blessing one possesses has been granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, and the person alone benefits from this transaction.

In addition, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to 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.

“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 order to make this transaction appealing it has been phrased in this way. In reality, every blessing one possesses has been granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, and the person alone benefits from this transaction.

In addition, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to 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.

“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 order to make this transaction appealing it has been phrased in this way. In reality, every blessing one possesses has been granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, and the person alone benefits from this transaction.

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.

“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 order to make this transaction appealing it has been phrased in this way. In reality, every blessing one possesses has been granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, and the person alone benefits from this transaction.

In addition, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

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.

“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 order to make this transaction appealing it has been phrased in this way. In reality, every blessing one possesses has been granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, and the person alone benefits from this transaction.

In addition, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to 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.

“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 order to make this transaction appealing it has been phrased in this way. In reality, every blessing one possesses has been granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, and the person alone benefits from this transaction.

In addition, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to 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.

“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 order to make this transaction appealing it has been phrased in this way. In reality, every blessing one possesses has been granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, and the person alone benefits from this transaction.

In addition, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to 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.

“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 order to make this transaction appealing it has been phrased in this way. In reality, every blessing one possesses has been granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, and the person alone benefits from this transaction.

In addition, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

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.

“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 order to make this transaction appealing it has been phrased in this way. In reality, every blessing one possesses has been granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, and the person alone benefits from this transaction.

In addition, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

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]...”

Chapter 57 – Al Hadid, Verses 12-15

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُم بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ
بُشْرَانِكُمْ أَليَوْمَ جَنَّتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنْفِقُونَ وَالْمُنْفِقَاتُ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا انظُرُونَا نَقَبِسْ
مِنْ نُورِكُمْ قِيلَ ارْجِعُوا وَرَاءَكُمْ فَالْتَمِسُوا نُورًا فَضُرِبَ بَيْنَهُم بِسُورٍ
لَهُ بَابٌ بَاطِنُهُ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ وَظَاهِرُهُ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ ﴿١٣﴾

يُنَادُونَهُمْ أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنَّكُمْ فَتَنْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ
وَتَرَبَّصْتُمْ وَارْتَبْتُمْ وَغَرَّتْكُمُ الْأَمَانِيُّ حَتَّىٰ جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ
وَعَرَّكُم بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ ﴿١٤﴾

فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْكُمْ فِدْيَةٌ وَلَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَأْوَانِكُمْ
النَّارُ هِيَ مَوْلَانِكُمْ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٥﴾

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right, [it will be said], “Your good tidings today are [of] gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein you will abide eternally.” That is what is the great attainment.

On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, “Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light.” It will be said, “Go back behind you and seek light.” And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.

They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], “Were we not with you?” They will say, “Yes, but you afflicted yourselves and awaited [misfortune for us] and doubted, and wishful thinking deluded you until there came the command of Allah. And the Deceiver [i.e., Satan] deceived you concerning Allah.

So today no ransom will be taken from you or from those who disbelieved. Your refuge is the Fire. It is most worthy of you, and wretched is the destination.””

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women... On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite 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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...”

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds.

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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...”

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good 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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...”

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds.

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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...”

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds.

In addition, as the light before them is connected to inward belief this means the stronger one's faith the stronger their light. Therefore, one must learn and act on 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...”

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...”

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds.

In addition, as the light on their right is connected to good deeds, the more one performs righteous deeds the stronger their light will be.

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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right, [it will be said], “Your good tidings today are [of] gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein you will abide eternally.”...”

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds.

The more one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the greater their light will be 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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right, [it will be said], “Your good tidings today are [of] gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein you will abide eternally.”...”

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds.

The more one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the greater their light will be 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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right, [it will be said], “Your good tidings today are [of] gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein you will abide eternally.”...”

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good 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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right, [it will be said], “Your good tidings today are [of] gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein you will abide eternally.” That is what is the great attainment.”

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds.

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.”

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right, [it will be said], “Your good tidings today are [of] gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein you will abide eternally.” That is what is the great attainment.”

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds.

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.””

“On the [same] Day 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?

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." ...They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves..."”

These verses indicate that one must not rely on their connection to pious people as this will only benefit them when they practically follow in their footsteps.

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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." ...They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves..."”

These verses also warn against bad companionship, as the hypocrites only possessed love and genuine friendship with each other not with the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

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.”

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves...””

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].”

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves...””

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 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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves...until there came the command of Allāh [death]...””

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds. It is this true belief the hypocrites failed to adopt thereby afflicting themselves with loss in both worlds.

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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves...until there came the command of Allāh [death]...””

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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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves...until there came the command of Allāh [death]...””

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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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves...until there came the command of Allāh [death]...””

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds. It is this true belief the hypocrites failed to adopt thereby afflicting themselves with loss 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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves...until there came the command of Allāh [death]...””

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds. It is this true belief the hypocrites failed to adopt thereby afflicting themselves with loss 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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves...until there came the command of Allāh [death]...””

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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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you...awaited [misfortune for us]...until there came the command of Allāh [death]...””

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds. It is this true belief the hypocrites failed to adopt thereby afflicting themselves with loss in both worlds.

The final part of these verses indicates their lack of sincerity 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...”

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you...doubted...until there came the command of Allāh [death]...””

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds. It is this true belief the hypocrites failed to adopt thereby afflicting themselves with loss in both worlds. The root of this behaviour is ignorance which in turn leads to weakness of faith. Weakness of faith 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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you...doubted...until there came the command of Allāh [death]...””

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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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but...wishful thinking deluded you until there came the command of Allāh [death]...””

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds. It is this true belief the hypocrites failed to adopt thereby afflicting themselves with loss in both worlds. Instead, they adopted wishful thinking in respect to 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.”

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but...wishful thinking deluded you until there came the command of Allāh [death]...””

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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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but...the Deceiver [Satan] deceived you concerning Allāh.””

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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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but...the Deceiver [Satan] deceived you concerning Allāh.””

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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.

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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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but...the Deceiver [Satan] deceived you concerning Allāh.””

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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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but...the Deceiver [worldly life] deceived you concerning Allāh.””

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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...”

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but...the Deceiver [worldly life] deceived you concerning Allāh.””

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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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but...the Deceiver [worldly life] deceived you concerning Allāh.””

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds. It is this true belief the hypocrites failed to adopt thereby afflicting themselves with loss in both worlds. As indicated by the final part of these verses, failing to adopt the correct understanding and perception in respect to this material world and the hereafter can lead to this outcome.

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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but...the Deceiver [worldly life] deceived you concerning Allāh.””

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds. It is this true belief the hypocrites failed to adopt thereby afflicting themselves with loss in both worlds. As indicated by the final part of these verses, failing to adopt the correct understanding and perception in respect to this material world and the hereafter can lead to this outcome.

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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves and awaited [misfortune for us] and doubted, and wishful thinking deluded you until there came the command of Allāh [death]. And the Deceiver [Satan] deceived you concerning Allāh. So today no ransom will be taken from you or from those who disbelieved...””

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?”

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves and awaited [misfortune for us] and doubted, and wishful thinking deluded you until there came the command of Allāh [death]. And the Deceiver [Satan] deceived you concerning Allāh. So today no ransom will be taken from you or from those who disbelieved. Your refuge is the Fire. It is most worthy of you, and wretched is the destination.””

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds. It is this true belief the hypocrites failed to adopt thereby afflicting themselves with loss in both worlds.

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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves and awaited [misfortune for us] and doubted, and wishful thinking deluded you until there came the command of Allāh [death]. And the Deceiver [Satan] deceived you concerning Allāh. So today no ransom will be taken from you or from those who disbelieved. Your refuge is the Fire. It is most worthy of you, and wretched is the destination.””

True belief which results in this light on Judgement Day involves inward faith, which is the light before them, supported by outward good deeds, which is the light on their right, as the right side is often connected to good deeds. It is this true belief the hypocrites failed to adopt thereby afflicting themselves with loss in both worlds.

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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves and awaited [misfortune for us] and doubted, and wishful thinking deluded you until there came the command of Allāh [death]. And the Deceiver [Satan] deceived you concerning Allāh. So today no ransom will be taken from you or from those who disbelieved. Your refuge is the Fire. It is most worthy of you, and wretched is the destination.””

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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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves and awaited [misfortune for us] and doubted, and wishful thinking deluded you until there came the command of Allāh [death]. And the Deceiver [Satan] deceived you concerning Allāh. So today no ransom will be taken from you or from those who disbelieved. Your refuge is the Fire. It is most worthy of you, and wretched is the destination.””

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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.

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right...On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you [to Earth] and seek light." And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.” They [i.e., the hypocrites] will call to them [i.e., the believers], "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves and awaited [misfortune for us] and doubted, and wishful thinking deluded you until there came the command of Allāh [death]. And the Deceiver [Satan] deceived you concerning Allāh. So today no ransom will be taken from you or from those who disbelieved. Your refuge is the Fire. It is most worthy of you, and wretched is the 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.

Chapter 57 – Al Hadid, Verses 16-17

﴿ أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فُسِقُونَ ﴾ ١٦

﴿ أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴾ ١٧

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened; and many of them are defiantly disobedient.

Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its lifelessness. We have made clear to you the signs; perhaps you will understand.”

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth?...”

Adopting true belief encourages one to humbly and sincerely submit to Islam.

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.

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth?...”

Adopting true belief encourages one to practically submit to Islam.

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.

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth?...”

Adopting true belief encourages one to remember Allah, the Exalted, correctly.

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.

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth?...”

Adopting true belief encourages one to 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.

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened...”

This verse indicates that as time progressed the people of the book treated their faith as empty practices, just like one fulfils cultural practices. The issue with treating faith like a cultural practice is that with the passing of time people give up cultural practices. For example, one will often observe a father who dresses according to his culture and heritage yet their child will dress according to a different culture. Therefore, as time passed for them they eventually abandoned practicing on their faith, as they were nothing but empty practices to them, and their faith became just an empty shell whereby people claimed to believe yet failed to practice their religion. This is quite evident when one observes people today who claim to following certain religions yet do not act upon their teachings at all. Unfortunately, the same thing has occurred with muslims who, with the passing of time, observed their religion as a few empty practices, which eventually the coming generations abandoned. The way to avoid this outcome is to understand that Islam is not a bunch of practices rather, it is a way of life which affects every moment of a muslim. This understanding only comes when one gains and acts on Islamic teachings instead of blindly following others in 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.

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened...”

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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.

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened...”

This verse indicates that as time progressed the people of the book treated their faith as empty practices, just like one fulfils cultural practices. The issue with treating faith like a cultural practice is that with the passing of time people give up cultural practices. For example, one will often observe a father who dresses according to his culture and heritage yet their child will dress according to a different culture. Therefore, as time passed for them they eventually abandoned practicing on their faith, as they were nothing but empty practices to them, and their faith became just an empty shell whereby people claimed to believe yet failed to practice their religion. This is quite evident when one observes people today who claim to following certain religions yet do not act upon their teachings at all. Unfortunately, the same thing has occurred with muslims who, with the passing of time, observed their religion as a few empty practices, which eventually the coming generations abandoned. The way to avoid this outcome is to understand that Islam is not a bunch of practices rather, it is a way of life which affects every moment of a muslim. This understanding only comes when one gains and acts on Islamic teachings instead of blindly following others 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.

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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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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“And among them are unlettered ones who do not know the Scripture except [indulgement in] wishful thinking, but they are only assuming.”

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.”

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened...”

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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.

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened...”

This verse also indicates that when one adopts hopes for a long life it will encourage them to concentrate on the material world instead of preparing for the hereafter.

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.

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened...”

This verse also indicates that when one adopts hopes for a long life it will encourage them to concentrate on the material world instead of preparing for the hereafter.

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?”

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened...”

This verse also indicates that when one adopts hopes for a long life it will encourage them to concentrate on the material world instead of preparing for the hereafter.

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.

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened...”

This verse also indicates that when one adopts hopes for a long life it will encourage them to concentrate on the material world instead of preparing for the hereafter.

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?

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened...”

This verse also indicates that when one adopts hopes for a long life it will encourage them to concentrate on the material world instead of preparing for the hereafter.

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.

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened; and many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

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.

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened; and many of them are 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.

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened; and many of them are defiantly disobedient. Know that Allāh gives life to the earth after its lifelessness. We have made clear to you the signs; perhaps you will understand.”

Just like Allah, the Exalted, gives life to a barren land, He can give life to a spiritually dead heart.

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.

There are many ways to soften the spiritual heart, such as spending time remembering Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue and heart. It is important to involve one's heart by concentrating on what is being recited so that it can become softened. But even if one fails to constantly involve the heart they should never give up. As remembering Allah, the Exalted, only via the tongue is much better than not remembering Him at all. The most superior form of remembering Allah, the Exalted, is reciting the Holy Quran. In order for one to involve their heart in the recitation they should strive to understand what they are reciting by either learning Arabic or by studying

the Holy Quran in a language they understand. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 23:

“Allah has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance [i.e., mention] of Allah...”

The next action which can lead to a soft spiritual heart is being kind to the poor, such as poor orphans and widows. Aiding the poor reminds one of the countless blessings Allah, the Exalted, has bestowed on them. The fact that Allah, the Exalted, has made a person self-sufficient and the helper of others can soften the heart as long as the muslim has a good intention.

Pondering about death often can cause the spiritual heart to become soft. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4258, that muslims should often remember the destroyer of pleasures meaning, death. This will cause one to take things seriously as they know they must prepare for death and the hereafter. This preparation will lead to a soft spiritual heart.

Muslims can also soften their spiritual heart by visiting graves regularly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him,

advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1569, that muslims should visit graves as it will remind them of the hereafter. But it is important to note, that this deed will only cause one's spiritual heart to become soft if they ponder over their death, grave and hereafter. Merely visiting graves will make a person's mood more serious but it will not soften their spiritual heart until this self-reflection is done.

Muslims can also contemplate on the past nations who were destroyed by Allah, the Exalted, because of their persistent disobedience. As discussed extensively throughout the Holy Quran and Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the past nations were more powerful, lived longer and obtained more worldly blessings than the people of the modern world yet, as they disobeyed Allah, the Exalted, none of these things benefited them. Their massive and unparalleled empires faded away leaving only a few signs behind in order to warn those who came after them. When a muslim truly reflects on these things their spiritual heart will soften which will encourage them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

Muslims must strive to soften their hearts through the advice given. Only then will they be able to focus on the hereafter and adequately prepare for it. The person whose spiritual heart is cured of hardness becomes one whose heart is soft, pure and strong. This means that its purity recognises the difference between truth and falsehood. Its softness encourages the person to act on the truth. Its strength allows one to reject falsehood through struggle and effort. When all these combine within a person through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, they will obtain success in this world and the next. 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."

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened; and many of them are defiantly disobedient. Know that Allāh gives life to the earth after its lifelessness. We have made clear to you the signs; perhaps you will understand.”

Just like Allah, the Exalted, gives life to a barren land, He can give life to a spiritually dead heart.

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.

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened; and many of them are defiantly disobedient. Know that Allāh gives life to the earth after its lifelessness. We have made clear to you the signs; perhaps you will understand.”

Just like Allah, the Exalted, gives life to a barren land, He can give life to a spiritually dead heart.

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.

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened; and many of them are defiantly disobedient. Know that Allāh gives life to the earth after its lifelessness. We have made clear to you the signs; perhaps you will understand.”

Giving life to a barren land has often been mentioned in the Holy Quran as proof for the resurrection which will occur on the Day of Judgement. So in this respect, these verses could mean that a cause of the negative characteristics mentioned in these verses is not truly believing in the Day of Judgement. The one who fails to truly believe in the Day of Judgement will not practically prepare for it, which means they will not practice on their faith. From this one can judge how much they believe in the Day of Judgement.

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 57 – Al Hadid, Verse 18

إِنَّ الْمُصَّدِّقِينَ وَالْمُصَّدِّقَاتِ وَأَقْرَضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا
يُضَاعَفُ لَهُمْ وَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾

“Indeed, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allah a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.”

“Indeed, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allāh a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.”

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 men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allāh a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.”

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.

“Indeed, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allāh a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.”

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]...”

“Indeed, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allāh a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.”

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.

“Indeed, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allāh a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.”

This includes using all 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, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allāh a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.”

This includes using all the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allāh a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.”

This includes using all the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allāh a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.”

This includes using all the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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.

“Indeed, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allāh a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.”

This includes using all 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, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allāh a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.”

As charity and a loan to Allah, the Exalted, has been mentioned separately it could indicate that the first mention of charity refers specifically to the obligatory charity and the second refers to voluntary charity.

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.

“Indeed, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allāh a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.”

One of the reasons women are specifically mentioned in this verse is that a husband, brother or father may withhold from using the blessings, such as their wealth, they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, because of their family. Therefore, muslim women are encouraged to adopt this characteristic so that they encourage their husbands, brothers and fathers to behave in this manner. In this respect, a person’s family can become a hinderance to good or a means to obtaining blessings in both worlds.

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 tranquillity 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.”

“...and [they who] have loaned Allāh a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.”

In order to make this transaction appealing it has been phrased in this way. In reality, every blessing one possesses has been granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, and the person alone benefits from this transaction.

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.

Chapter 57 – Al Hadid, Verse 19

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦٓ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصّٰدِقُونَ
وَالشُّهَدَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ وَنُورُهُمْ وَالَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ

“And those who have believed in Allah and His messengers - those are the supporters of truth and the witnesses, with their Lord. For them is their reward and their light. But those who have disbelieved and denied Our signs - those are the companions of Hellfire.”

“And those who have believed in Allah and His messengers...But those who have disbelieved and denied Our signs - those are the companions of Hellfire.”

The two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, are the Holy Quran and the Holy 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, 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 those who have believed in Allāh and His messengers - those are the supporters of truth...”

This verse can also be interpreted to mean that they are the truthful. Adopting true belief will encourage one to act on all aspects of truthfulness.

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 those who have believed in Allāh and His messengers - those are the supporters of truth...”

This verse can also be interpreted to mean that they are strong and true in faith. This means they adopted excellence of faith.

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 those who have believed in Allāh and His messengers - those are the supporters of truth...”

This verse can also be interpreted to mean that they are strong and true in faith. This means they have adopted 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 who have believed in Allāh and His messengers - those are the supporters of truth...”

This verse can also be interpreted to mean that they are strong and true in 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.”

“And those who have believed in Allah and His messengers - those are the supporters of truth and the witnesses, with their Lord...”

As true belief involves inward belief supported by outward actions the person who adopts this will support Islam and fulfil their role as the witness and ambassador 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 those who have believed in Allah and His messengers - those are [in the ranks of] the supporters of truth and the witnesses [martyrs], with their Lord...”

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 those who have believed in Allāh and His messengers - those are the supporters of truth and the witnesses, with their Lord. For them is their reward and their light...”

The one who adopts true belief meaning, inward belief which is supported by outward actions, will be granted a light which will guide them through every situation so that they obtain reward, success and 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.

“And those who have believed in Allāh and His messengers - those are the supporters of truth and the witnesses, with their Lord. For them is their reward and their light...”

The one who adopts true belief meaning, inward belief which is supported by outward actions, will be granted a light which will guide them through every situation so that they obtain reward, success and 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.

“And those who have believed in Allāh and His messengers - those are the supporters of truth and the witnesses, with their Lord. For them is their reward and their light...”

The one who adopts true belief meaning, inward belief which is supported by outward actions, will be granted a light which will guide them through every situation so that they obtain reward, success and 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.

“And those who have believed in Allāh and His messengers - those are the supporters of truth and the witnesses, with their Lord. For them is their reward and their light...”

The one who adopts true belief meaning, inward belief which is supported by outward actions, will be granted a light which will guide them through every situation so that they obtain reward, success and 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 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 have believed in Allāh and His messengers - those are the supporters of truth and the witnesses, with their Lord. For them is their reward and their light...”

The one who adopts true belief meaning, inward belief which is supported by outward actions, will be granted a light which will guide them through every situation so that they obtain reward, success and 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.

“And those who have believed in Allāh and His messengers - those are the supporters of truth and the witnesses, with their Lord. For them is their reward and their light...”

The one who adopts true belief meaning, inward belief which is supported by outward actions, will be granted a light which will guide them through every situation so that they obtain reward, success and peace 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.

“...But those who have disbelieved and denied Our signs - those are the companions of Hellfire.”

The two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, are the Holy Quran and 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.

“...But those who have disbelieved and denied Our signs - those are the companions of Hellfire.”

The two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, are the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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 57 – Al Hadid, Verses 20-21

أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَهَوٌّ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ
بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاتُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ
الْكُفَّارَ بِنَائِهِ، ثُمَّ يَهِيْجُ فَتَرْتَهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَمًا
وَفِي الْأٰخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا
الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ ﴿٢٠﴾

سَابِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ
السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أُعِدَّتْ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ
الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢١﴾

“Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children - like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth pleases the tillers; then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes [scattered] debris. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment and

forgiveness from Allah and approval. And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion.

Race [compete] toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and earth, prepared for those who believed in Allah and His messengers. That is the bounty of Allah which He gives to whom He wills, and Allah is the possessor of great bounty.”

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This verse indicates the fickle nature of the material world. Even though it pleases people yet this pleasure does not last long. These worldly things will only become a source of stress for them and they will eventually slip through their fingers during their lives or at the time of their death. The one who fails to use these worldly blessings in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because they are too preoccupied fulfilling their desires will be left empty handed on Judgement Day.

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.

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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.”

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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.

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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.

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Therefore, one must use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain 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.

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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.”

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Therefore, one must use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain peace and success in both worlds.

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.”

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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.

“Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children - like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth pleases the tillers; then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes [scattered] debris...And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion.”

This verse indicates the fickle nature of the material world. Even though it pleases people yet this pleasure does not last long. These worldly things will only become a source of stress for them and they will eventually slip through their fingers during their lives or at the time of their death. The one who fails to use these worldly blessings in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because they are too preoccupied fulfilling their desires will be left empty handed on Judgement Day.

Therefore, one must use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain peace and success in both worlds.

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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Therefore, one must use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain 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.

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One must adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to this material world and the hereafter if they desire to avoid this outcome.

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.

“Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children - like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth pleases the tillers; then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes [scattered] debris...And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion.”

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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."

“Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children - like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth pleases the tillers; then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes [scattered] debris...And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion.”

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One must adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to this material world and the hereafter if they desire to avoid this outcome.

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.

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One must adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to this material world and the hereafter if they desire to avoid this outcome.

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...”

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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.

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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.

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One must understand the temporal nature of this world and their lifespan in order to avoid this outcome.

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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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?”

“Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children - like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth pleases the tillers; then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes [scattered] debris...And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion.”

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One must understand the temporal nature of this world and their lifespan in order to avoid this outcome.

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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One must understand the temporal nature of this world and their lifespan in order to avoid this outcome.

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, their 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.

“Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children - like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth pleases the tillers; then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes [scattered] debris...And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion.”

This verse indicates the fickle nature of the material world. Even though it pleases people yet this pleasure does not last long. These worldly things will only become a source of stress for them and they will eventually slip through their fingers during their lives or at the time of their death. The one who fails to use these worldly blessings in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because they are too preoccupied fulfilling their desires will be left empty handed on Judgement Day.

One must understand the temporal nature of this world and their lifespan in order to avoid this outcome.

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 in the Hereafter is severe punishment...”

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 in the Hereafter is severe punishment...”

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 in the Hereafter is 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.

“...And in the Hereafter is...forgiveness from Allāh...”

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 in the Hereafter is...from Allāh and approval...”

It is important to note, one will gain the approval of Allah, the Exalted, when they approve and are content with His decrees.

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.”

“...And in the Hereafter is...from Allāh and approval...”

It is important to note, one will gain the approval of Allah, the Exalted, when they approve and are content with His decrees.

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 in the Hereafter is...from Allāh and approval...”

It is important to note, one will gain the approval of Allah, the Exalted, when they approve and are content with His decrees.

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 in the Hereafter is...from Allāh and approval...”

It is important to note, one will gain the approval of Allah, the Exalted, when they approve and are content with His decrees. The prove of this is 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 in the Hereafter is severe punishment and forgiveness from Allāh and approval...”

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 in the Hereafter is severe punishment and forgiveness from Allāh and approval...”

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.

***“...And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion.
Race [compete] toward forgiveness from your 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.

***“...And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion.
Race [compete] toward forgiveness from your Lord...”***

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 what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion. Race [compete] toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and earth...”

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 what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion. Race [compete] toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and earth...”

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 what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion. Race [compete] toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and earth...”

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 what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion. Race [compete] toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and earth...”

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.

“...And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion. Race [compete] toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and earth, prepared for those who believed in Allāh and His messengers...”

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 what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion. Race [compete] toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and earth, prepared for those who believed in Allāh and His messengers. That is the bounty of Allāh which He gives to whom He wills, and Allāh is the possessor of great bounty.”

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 what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion. Race [compete] toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and earth, prepared for those who believed in Allāh and His messengers. That is the bounty of Allāh which He gives to whom He wills, and Allāh is the possessor of great bounty.”

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 57 – Al Hadid, Verses 22-24

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا ءَاتَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿٢٣﴾

الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٢٤﴾

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register 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. And Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.

[Those] who are stingy and enjoin upon people stinginess. And whoever turns away - then indeed, Allah is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy.”

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allah, is easy.”

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.

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allah, is easy.”

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.

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register 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...”

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...”

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 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.

Contentment is an excellent virtue but not obligatory on a muslim whereas, patience is something all muslims must adopt. A muslim should simply remember facing a difficulty with patience may well be the reason they enter Paradise. In fact, when facing a worldly difficulty a muslim should be grateful it was not a worse difficulty. They should be grateful for being given the ability to show patience and more importantly, grateful for the difficulty not being linked to their faith, which could lead to eternal damnation.

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register 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...”

One thing which can help a person to avoid stress is by adopting a balanced state of mind. This is when one tries to control their emotions in such a way that they do not allow themselves to experience extreme emotional states as these often lead to stress and mental disorders. This has been indicated in the main verses under discussion.

Islam does not prohibit one from showing emotions as this is a part of being human. But it advises a balanced state of mind whereby one does not swing from one extreme emotion to another. Being sad in difficult situations is acceptable but one should not despair, which is extreme sadness, as this often leads to other mental disorders, such as depression. And being happy is acceptable but one should not become overly happy namely, exultant, as this can often lead to sins and regrets in both worlds. A muslim should strive to obtain a balanced state of mind by remembering the countless blessings they still possess in times of difficulty which prevents extreme sadness namely, despair. And in times of ease they should remember that they will be held accountable for the thing that pleases them and if they misuse it or fail to fulfil the duties linked to it they may face punishment over it. This will prevent one from becoming overly happy namely, exultant.

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

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register 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...”

Remaining sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, during both times of ease and difficulty will prevent the extreme mentalities mentioned in these verses.

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.”

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register 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...[Those] who are stingy and enjoin upon people stinginess...”

One should bear in mind whatever is destined to be their provision will not increase or decrease irrespective of how they behave.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, allocated all things, such as provision, to all creatures over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth.

It is important to understand that there are two aspects in respect to all situations, such as gaining one's provision. The first aspect is what Allah, the Exalted, has decided meaning, destiny; this will occur and nothing in creation can prevent this from occurring. As this is out of a person's hands it makes no sense to stress over this aspect as they have no influence on destiny irrespective of what they or anybody else does.

The second aspect is one's own efforts. This aspect a person has full control over and they should therefore concentrate on this aspect by using the means they have been provided such as their physical strength to obey

Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, which they have no control over, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to gain lawful provision in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents while avoiding the unlawful, excess, waste and extravagance.

To conclude, a muslim should never waste time stressing over things they have no control or influence over instead they should use the means they possess and act on those things which they have control over according to the teachings of Islam. This is what Allah, the Exalted, has commanded.

“...And Allāh does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.”

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

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

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

The proud is the one who rejects the truth when it is presented to them simply because it did not come from them and as it challenges their desires and mentality. The proud person also believes they are superior to others even though they are unaware of their own ultimate end and the ultimate end of others. This is plain ignorance. In reality, it is foolish to be proud of anything seeing as Allah, the Exalted, created and granted everything a

person owns. Even the righteous deeds one performs are only due to the inspiration, knowledge and strength granted by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, being proud of something which does not innately belong to them is plain foolishness. This is just like a person who becomes proud over a mansion they do not even own or live in.

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

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

“...And Allāh does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.”

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.”

“[Those] who are stingy and enjoin upon people stinginess...”

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...”

“[Those] who are stingy and enjoin upon people stinginess...”

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2511, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned Muslims against greed. This 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.

“[Those] who are stingy and enjoin upon people stinginess...”

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.

“[Those] who are stingy and enjoin upon people stinginess...”

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.”

“...And whoever turns away - then indeed, Allāh is the Free of need...”

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 whoever turns away - then indeed, Allāh is the Free of need...”

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 turns away - then indeed, Allāh is the Free of need...”

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 turns away - then indeed, Allāh is the Free of need...”

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

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

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

“...indeed, Allāh 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.”

“[Those] who are stingy and enjoin upon people stinginess. And whoever turns away - then indeed, Allāh is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy.”

This verse also criticises those who are miserly in respect to all the blessings they have been granted by failing to use them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the Creator and real Owner of all blessings.

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 are stingy and enjoin upon people stinginess. And whoever turns away - then indeed, Allāh is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy.”

This verse also criticises those who are miserly in respect to all the blessings they have been granted by failing to use them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the Creator and real Owner of all blessings. 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 57 – Al Hadid, Verse 25

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ
بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ
بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

“We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice. And We sent down iron, wherein is great military might and benefits for the people, and so that Allah may make evident those who support Him and His messengers unseen. Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might.”

“We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture...”

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and divine scriptures 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.

“We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them...the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in 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.¹ 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.

“We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in 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.

“We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice...”

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.”

“We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice. And We sent down iron, wherein is great military might and benefits for the people, and so that Allāh may make evident those who support Him and His messengers unseen...”

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 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.

“We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice. And We sent down iron, wherein is great military might and benefits for the people, and so that Allāh may make evident those who support Him and His messengers unseen...”

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.”

“We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice. And We sent down iron, wherein is great military might and benefits for the people, and so that Allāh may make evident those who support Him and His messengers unseen...”

An aspect of supporting the religion of Allah, the Exalted, thereby spreading justice throughout society, is using all the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. If one observes the history and present situation of humanity they will understand that injustice only spreads throughout society when people misuse the blessings they possess, such as authority.

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 have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice. And We sent down iron, wherein is great military might and benefits for the people, and so that Allāh may make evident those who support Him and His messengers unseen...”

An aspect of supporting the religion of Allah, the Exalted, thereby spreading justice throughout society, is using all the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. If one observes the history and present situation of humanity they will understand that injustice only spreads throughout society when people misuse the blessings they possess, such as authority. 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 so that Allāh may make evident those who support Him and His messengers unseen...”

Adopting excellence of faith will aid one to behave in this manner.

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 so that Allāh may make evident those who support Him and His messengers unseen...”

This also includes a person sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even when they are hidden from the sight of people.

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 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.

“...and so that Allāh may make evident those who support Him and His messengers unseen...”

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 so that Allah may make evident those who support Him and His messengers unseen...”

This verse 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.

“...Indeed, Allāh is Powerful and 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 57 – Al Hadid, Verses 26-27

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا النُّبُوَّةَ
وَالْكِتَابَ فَمِنْهُمْ مُهْتَدٍ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ



ثُمَّ قَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم بِرُسُلِنَا وَقَفَّيْنَا بِعِيسَى ابْنِ
مَرْيَمَ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنجِيلَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ
اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَرَهَابَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا
عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا
فَأَتَيْنَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ



*“And We have already sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their
descendants prophethood and scripture; and among them is he who is
guided, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.*

*Then We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and
followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel. And
We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy
and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them*

except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allah. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

“And We have already sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their descendants prophethood and scripture; and among them is he who is guided, but many of them are defiantly disobedient. Then We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel...”

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and divine scriptures 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 have already sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their descendants prophethood and scripture; and among them is he who is guided, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

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 We have already sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their descendants prophethood and scripture; and among them is he who is guided, but many of them are 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 We have already sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their descendants prophethood and scripture; and among them is he who is guided, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

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 already sent Noah and Abraham...Then We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel. And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy...”

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.

“And We have already sent Noah and Abraham...Then We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel. And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy...”

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.

“...We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel...and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allāh. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

Even though some of them adopted monasticism in order to please Allah, the Exalted, it would have been better if they adhered to the guidance that was given to 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.

“...We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel...and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allāh. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

Even though some of them adopted monasticism in order to please Allah, the Exalted, it would have been better if they adhered to the guidance that was given to 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.

“...We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel...and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allāh. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

They failed to fulfil the rights of monasticism correctly as they turned this into a physical practice by disconnecting from their responsibilities and the physical world. Whereas, the truth lies in spiritually detaching from the material world instead of a physical detachment.

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 righteous predecessors understood why Allah, the Exalted, created them and what He desired from them. So they only spent wealth according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and never spent on things according to their own desires. These righteous people were certain that their souls and possessions belonged only to Allah, the Exalted. So they reached the highest level of gratitude by using each worldly blessing according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. These people may have been given plenty of worldly things but they did not put their trust in them. They only put their trust in Allah, the Exalted. They took no pleasure in their belongings and only saw them as a duty which needed to be discharged according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Their hearts were not attached to their belongings nor did they exclude others from enjoying the worldly blessings they possessed by greedily hoarding them. This is why they possessed worldly things but the things did not possess them. They had wealth but chose poverty for themselves as they spent to fulfil the needs of others. They took delight only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by using their worldly possessions according to His wish instead of their own. Neither did they grieve or show displeasure when they lost worldly things as they preferred the choice of Allah, the Exalted, over all things. They took no pleasure or joy in their worldly possessions. So in reality, they had abstained from the material world even though they possessed worldly things. The possessions were in their hands not in their hearts. They understood that the true love of Allah, the Exalted, consisted of turning away from this material world with their hearts and intentions. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 131:

“And do not extend your eyes toward that by which We have given enjoyment to [some] categories of them, [its being but] the splendor of worldly life by which We test them. And the provision of your Lord is better and more enduring.”

“...We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel...and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allāh. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

They failed to fulfil the rights of monasticism correctly as they turned this into a physical practice by disconnecting from their responsibilities and the physical world. Whereas, the truth lies in spiritually detaching from the material world instead of a physical detachment. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, instead of in ways pleasing to themselves and others. The one who behaves in this manner is detached from the material world even if they possess all of 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.

“...We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel...and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allāh. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

They failed to fulfil the rights of monasticism correctly as they turned this into a physical practice by disconnecting from their responsibilities and the physical world. Whereas, the truth lies in spiritually detaching from the material world instead of a physical detachment. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, instead of in ways pleasing to themselves and others. The one who behaves in this manner is detached from the material world even if they possess all of 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.

***“...So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward,
but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”***

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.

“They [i.e., their leaders] will say, “Rather, you [yourselves] were not 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.

Chapter 57 – Al Hadid, Verses 28-29 of 29

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وءَامِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ
كَفَلَيْنِ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرْ
لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

لَئَلَّا يَعْلَمَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ ءَلَّا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّنْ
فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو
الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٩﴾

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk and forgive you; and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

[This is] so that the People of the Scripture may know that they are not able [to obtain] anything from the bounty of Allah and that [all] bounty is in the hand of Allah; He gives it to whom He wills. And Allah is the possessor of great bounty.”

“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.

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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, fear Allah...”

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.

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk and forgive you...[This is] so that the People of the Scripture may know that they are not able [to obtain] anything from the bounty of Allah and that [all] bounty is in the hand of Allah; He gives it to whom He wills...”

These verses are addressed to the people of the book who claimed faith in Allah, the Exalted. These verses make it clear that they will not obtain success in both worlds until they sincerely obey and follow 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.

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk and forgive you...[This is] so that the People of the Scripture may know that they are not able [to obtain] anything from the bounty of Allah and that [all] bounty is in the hand of Allah; He gives it to whom He wills...”

These verses are addressed to the people of the book who claimed faith in Allah, the Exalted. These verses make it clear that they will not obtain success in both worlds until they sincerely obey and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Allah, the Exalted, warns 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 them 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 they 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.

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk and forgive you...[This is] so that the People of the Scripture may know that they are not able [to obtain] anything from the bounty of Allah and that [all] bounty is in the hand of Allah; He gives it to whom He wills...”

These verses are addressed to the people of the book who claimed faith in Allah, the Exalted. These verses make it clear that they will not obtain success in both worlds until they sincerely obey and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

An aspect of the people of the book’s wishful thinking and assumption was that they were the chosen ones and they therefore were guaranteed salvation in both worlds even if they did not bother learning and acting on their divine scriptures. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verse 18:

“But the Jews and the Christians say, “We are the children of Allāh and His beloved.” Say, “Then why does He punish you for your sins?” Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills. And to Allāh belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, and to Him is the [final] destination.”

Because of this misguided mentality they abandoned learning and acting on their faith even though they were clearly commanded countless times to adhere to the teachings of their divine scriptures. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 63:

“And [recall] when We took your covenant, [O Children of Israel, to abide by the Torah] and We raised over you the mount, [saying], "Take what We have given you with determination and remember what is in it that perhaps you may become righteous.””

Unfortunately, many Muslims have followed in their footsteps by abandoning learning and acting on the teachings of Islam and instead assume that as they belong to the nation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they are the chosen ones and are guaranteed salvation. This was the same error in judgement made by the people of the book and Allah, the Exalted, punished them for it.

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.”

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk and forgive you...”

The first belief could be referring to the inward aspects of belief and the second, the practical aspects of belief.

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, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk and forgive you...”

The first belief could be referring to the inward aspects of belief and the second, the practical aspects of 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 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, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk and forgive you...”

The light mentioned in this verse guides one through every situation so that they obtain 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.

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk and forgive you...”

The light mentioned in this verse guides one through every situation so that they obtain 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.

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk and forgive you...”

The light mentioned in this verse guides one through every situation so that they obtain 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.

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk and forgive you...”

The light mentioned in this verse guides one through every situation so that they obtain peace and success 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.

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk and forgive you...”

The light mentioned in this verse guides one through every situation so that they obtain peace and success 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.

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk and forgive you...”

The light mentioned in this verse guides one through every situation so that they obtain peace and success in both worlds.

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 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.

“...And Allāh is the possessor of great bounty.”

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.”

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 58 – Al Mujadila, Verses 1-4

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى
اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١﴾

الَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْكُمْ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ مَا هُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِهِمْ إِنْ
أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ إِلَّا الَّتِي وَلَدْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَقُولُونَ مُنْكَرًا مِّنَ
الْقَوْلِ وَزُورًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُوفٌ غَفُورٌ ﴿٢﴾

وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرُ
رَقَبَةٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَا ذَٰلِكُمْ تُوعِظُونَ بِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٣﴾

فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَّ^ط
 فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فِإِطْعَامُ سِتِّينَ مِسْكِينًا ذَلِكَ لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ
 وَرَسُولِهِ^ع وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾

“Certainly has Allah heard the speech of the one who argues [i.e., pleads] with you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] concerning her husband and directs her complaint to Allah. And Allah hears your dialogue; indeed, Allah is Hearing and Seeing.

Those who pronounce zihār among you [to separate] from their wives - they are not [consequently] their mothers. Their mothers are none but those who gave birth to them. And indeed, they are saying an objectionable statement and a falsehood. But indeed, Allah is Pardoning and Forgiving.

And those who pronounce zihār from their wives and then [wish to] go back on what they said - then [there must be] the freeing of a slave before they touch one another. That is what you are admonished thereby; and Allah is Aware of what you do.

And he who does not find [a slave] - then a fast for two months consecutively before they touch one another; and he who is unable - then the feeding of sixty poor persons. That is for you to believe [completely] in Allah and His Messenger; and those are the limits [set by] Allah. And for the disbelievers is a painful punishment.”

“Certainly has Allah heard the speech of the one who argues [i.e., pleads] with you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]...And Allah hears your dialogue; indeed, Allah is Hearing and 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.

“Certainly has Allah heard the speech of the one who argues [i.e., pleads] with you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] concerning her husband...”

Generally speaking, if a muslim desires to minimize the opportunity for complaining about their spouse they should find a spouse based on the teachings of Islam. For example, 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.

“Certainly has Allah heard the speech of the one who argues [i.e., pleads] with you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] concerning her husband and directs her complaint to Allah...”

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.

“Certainly has Allah heard the speech of the one who argues [i.e., pleads] with you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] concerning her husband and directs her complaint to Allah. And Allah hears your dialogue...Those who pronounce *ḡihār* among you [to separate] from their wives - they are not [consequently] their mothers. Their mothers are none but those who gave birth to them. And indeed, they are saying an objectionable statement and a falsehood...And those who pronounce *ḡihār* from their wives and then [wish to] go back on what they said - then [there must be] the freeing of a slave before they touch one another. That is what you are admonished thereby...And he who does not find [a slave] - then a fast for two months consecutively before they touch one another; and he who is unable - then the feeding of sixty poor persons...”

These verses discuss an abominable practice, which unfortunately still occurs amongst muslims in different forms. It is when a husband, in order to show disdain and anger towards his wife, compares her and being intimate with her to his mother. In the time before Islam this was considered a form of divorcing one's wife.

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.

“Certainly has Allah heard the speech of the one who argues [i.e., pleads] with you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] concerning her husband and directs her complaint to Allah. And Allah hears your dialogue...Those who pronounce zihār among you [to separate] from their wives - they are not [consequently] their mothers. Their mothers are none but those who gave birth to them. And indeed, they are saying an objectionable statement and a falsehood...And those who pronounce zihār from their wives and then [wish to] go back on what they said - then [there must be] the freeing of a slave before they touch one another. That is what you are admonished thereby...And he who does not find [a slave] - then a fast for two months consecutively before they touch one another; and he who is unable - then the feeding of sixty poor persons...”

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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.

“...And Allāh hears your dialogue...”

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.

“...But indeed, Allāh is Pardoning and 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.”

“...That is what you are admonished thereby...”

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 Allāh is Aware of what you do.”

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 he who does not find [a slave] - then a fast for two months consecutively before they touch one another...”

In a Divine Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2219, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that all righteous deeds people perform are for themselves except for fasting as this is for Allah, the Exalted, and He shall reward it directly.

This Hadith indicates the uniqueness of fasting. One of the reasons it is described in this manner is because all other righteous deeds are visible to people, such as the prayer, or they are between people, such as secret charity. Whereas, fasting is a unique righteous deed as others cannot know someone is fasting by only observing them.

In addition, fasting is a righteous deed which puts a lock on every aspect of oneself. Meaning, a person who fasts correctly will be prevented from committing verbal and physical sins, such as looking at and hearing unlawful things. This is also achieved through the prayer but the prayer is only performed for a short time and is visible to others whereas, fasting occurs throughout the day and is invisible to others. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

“...Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing...”

It is clear from the following verse a person who does not complete the obligatory fasts without a valid reason will not be a true believer as the two have been directly connected. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 183:

“O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 723, that if a muslim does not complete a single obligatory fast without a valid reason they cannot make up for the reward and blessings lost even if they fasted every day for their entire life.

In addition, as indicated by the verse quoted earlier fasting correctly leads to piety. Meaning, simply starving during the day does not lead to piety but paying extra attention to abstaining from sins and performing righteous deeds during the fast will lead to piety. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 707, warns that a fast will not be significant if one does not abstain from speaking and acting on falsehood. A similar Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1690, warns that some fasting people obtain nothing except hunger. When one becomes more aware and careful in obeying Allah, the Exalted, while they are fasting this habit will eventually affect them so they behave in a similar way even when they are not fasting. This is in fact true piety.

The righteousness mentioned in the verse quoted earlier is connected to fasting as fasting reduces one's evil desires and passions. It prevents

pride and the encouragement of sins. This is because fasting hinders the appetite of the stomach and one's carnal desires. These two things lead to many sins. In addition, the desire for these two things is greater than the desire for other unlawful things. So whoever controls them through fasting will find it easier to control the weaker evil desires. This leads to true righteousness.

As briefly indicated earlier there are different levels of fasting. The first and lowest level of fasting is when one abstains from the things which will break their fast, such as food. The next level is abstaining from sins which damages one's fast thereby reducing the reward of their fast, such as lying. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2235. Fasting which involves each member of the body is the next level. This is when each body part fasts from sins for example, the eyes from looking at the unlawful, the ears from listening to the unlawful and so on. The next level is when one behaves in this manner even when they are not fasting. Finally, the highest level of fasting is abstaining from all things which are not connected to Allah, the Exalted.

A muslim should also fast inwardly as their body fasts outwardly by abstaining from sinful or vain thoughts. They should fast from persisting on their own plans in respect to their desires and try to concentrate on fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. In addition, they should fast from inwardly challenging the decree of Allah, the Exalted, and instead except destiny and whatever it brings knowing Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind these 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.”

Finally, a muslim should aim for the highest reward by keeping their fast a secret and not informing others if it is avoidable as informing others unnecessarily leads to a loss of reward as it is an aspect of showing off.

“...That is for you to believe [completely] in Allāh 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 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 those are the limits [set by] Allāh...”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the lawful and unlawful have been made clear by Islam. In between them are doubtful things which should be avoided in order to protect one's faith and honor.

The vast majority of muslims are aware of the obligatory duties and the majority of unlawful things, such as drinking alcohol. So these create no doubt within muslims therefore they should act accordingly. Meaning, fulfil the obligatory duties and abstain from the unlawful according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. All other things which are not obligatory and create a doubt in society should therefore be avoided. Allah, the Exalted, will not question why someone did not perform a voluntary deed instead He will ask why they performed a voluntary deed. Therefore, leaving the voluntary action will have no consequences in the hereafter whereas performing a voluntary deed will namely, punishment, reward or forgiveness. It is important for muslims to act on this short but extremely important Hadith as it will solve and prevent many problems and debates. It is important to understand that when one indulges in doubtful or even vain things it will take them one step closer to the unlawful. For example, sinful speech is often preceded by vain and useless speech. Therefore, it is much safer for a muslim's faith and honor to avoid doubtful and vain things.

“...and those are the limits [set by] Allāh...”

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 for the disbelievers is a painful 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 for the disbelievers is 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.

Chapter 58 – Al Mujadila, Verses 5-6

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ كُبِتُوا كَمَا كُبِتَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
وَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴿٥﴾

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا أَحْصَاهُ
اللَّهُ وَنَسُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٦﴾

“Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messenger are abased as those before them were abased. And We have certainly sent down verses of clear evidence. And for the disbelievers is a humiliating punishment.

On the Day when Allah will resurrect them all and inform them of what they did. Allah had enumerated it, while they forgot it; and Allah is, over all things, Witness.”

“Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messenger are abased...”

This includes failing to show sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, and His 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 oppose Allah and His Messenger are abased...”

This involves failing to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His 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.

“Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messenger are abased...”

This involves failing to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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 oppose Allah and His Messenger are abased...”

This involves failing to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His 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.

“Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messenger are abased...”

This involves failing to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His 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.

“Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messenger are abased...”

This involves failing to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His 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.

“Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messenger are abased...”

This involves failing to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and 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.

“Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messenger are abased...”

This involves failing to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His 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.

“Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messenger are abased as those before them were abased...”

This involves failing to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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 oppose Allah and His Messenger are abased as those before them were abased...”

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 certainly sent down verses of clear evidence...”

One will only benefit from the clear verses 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 We have certainly sent down verses of clear evidence...”

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 We have certainly sent down verses of clear evidence. And for the disbelievers is a humiliating 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.

“...And for the disbelievers is a humiliating punishment. On the Day when Allāh will resurrect them all and inform them of what they did...”

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 for the disbelievers is a humiliating punishment. On the Day when Allāh will resurrect them all and inform them of what they did...”

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 for the disbelievers is a humiliating punishment. On the Day when Allāh will resurrect them all and inform them of what they did...”

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 for the disbelievers is a humiliating punishment. On the Day when Allāh will resurrect them all and inform them of what they did...”

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 for the disbelievers is a humiliating punishment. On the Day when Allāh will resurrect them all and inform them of what they did...”

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.

“On the Day when Allāh will resurrect them all and inform them of what they did. Allāh had enumerated it, while they forgot it; and Allāh is, over all things, Witness.”

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.

“On the Day when Allāh will resurrect them all and inform them of what they did. Allāh had enumerated it, while they forgot it; and Allāh is, over all things, Witness.”

One must prepare for their Final Judgement 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.

“On the Day when Allāh will resurrect them all and inform them of what they did. Allāh had enumerated it, while they forgot it; and Allāh is, over all things, Witness.”

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 Allāh is, over all things, 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 over 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 58 – Al Mujadila, Verse 7

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا
يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ
إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا آدْنَى مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرَ إِلَّا هُوَ
مَعَهُمْ أَيُّنَ مَا كَانُوا ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ



“Have you not considered that Allah knows what is in the heavens and what is on the earth? There are not three in a private conversation but that He is the fourth of them, nor are there five but that He is the sixth of them - and no less than that and no more except that He is with them [in knowledge] wherever they are. Then He will inform them of what they did, on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed Allah is, of all things, Knowing.”

“Have you not considered that...”

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.

“Have you not considered that Allah knows what is in the heavens and what is on the earth?...Indeed Allah 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.

“...There are not three in a private conversation but that He is the fourth of them, nor are there five but that He is the sixth of them - and no less than that and no more except that He is with them [in knowledge] wherever they are...”

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.

“...There are not three in a private conversation but that He is the fourth of them, nor are there five but that He is the sixth of them - and no less than that and no more except that He is with them [in knowledge] wherever they are...”

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.

“...There are not three in a private conversation but that He is the fourth of them, nor are there five but that He is the sixth of them - and no less than that and no more except that He is with them [in knowledge] wherever they are...”

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.”

“...Then He will inform them of what they did, on the Day of Resurrection...”

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.

“...Then He will inform them of what they did, on the Day of Resurrection...”

One must prepare for their Final Judgement 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.

“...Then He will inform them of what they did, on the Day of Resurrection...”

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 58 – Al Mujadila, Verses 8-10

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نُهُوا عَنِ النَّجْوَى ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ
وَيَتَنَجَّوْنَ بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ وَإِذَا
جَاءُوكَ حَيَّوكَ بِمَا لَمْ يُحِبَّكَ بِهِ اللَّهُ وَيَقُولُونَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ
لَوْلَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللَّهُ بِمَا نَقُولُ حَسْبُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ يَصَلَوْنَهَا فَلْيَسَّ
الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٨﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا تَنَجَّيْتُمْ فَلَا تَتَنَجَّوْا بِالْإِثْمِ
وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ وَتَنَجَّوْا بِالْبِرِّ وَالنَّقْوَى وَأَتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

إِنَّمَا النَّجْوَى مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ لِيَحْزُنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَيْسَ
بِضَارِهِمْ شَيْءٌ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ
﴿١٠﴾

“Have you not considered those who were forbidden from private conversation [ridicule and conspiracy] and then return to that which they were forbidden and converse among themselves about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger? And when they come to you, they greet you with that [word] by which Allah does not greet you and say among themselves, "Why does Allah not punish us for what we say?" Sufficient for them is Hell, which they will [enter to] burn, and wretched is the destination.

O you who have believed, when you converse privately, do not converse about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger but converse about righteousness and piety. And fear Allah, to whom you will be gathered.

Private conversation is only from Satan that he may grieve those who have believed, but he will not harm them at all except by permission of Allah. And upon Allah let the believers rely.”

“Have you not considered...”

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.

“Have you not considered those who were forbidden from private conversation [ridicule and conspiracy] and then return to that which they were forbidden and converse among themselves about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger?...O you who have believed, when you converse privately, do not converse about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger but converse about righteousness and piety...Private conversation is only from Satan that he may grieve those who have believed...”

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.

“Have you not considered those who were forbidden from private conversation [ridicule and conspiracy] and then return to that which they were forbidden and converse among themselves about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger?...O you who have believed, when you converse privately, do not converse about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger but converse about righteousness and piety...Private conversation is only from Satan that he may grieve those who have believed...”

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.

“Have you not considered those who were forbidden from private conversation [ridicule and conspiracy] and then return to that which they were forbidden and converse among themselves about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger?...O you who have believed, when you converse privately, do not converse about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger but converse about righteousness and piety...Private conversation is only from Satan that he may grieve those who have believed...”

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.

“Have you not considered those who were forbidden from private conversation [ridicule and conspiracy] and then return to that which they were forbidden and converse among themselves about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger?...O you who have believed, when you converse privately, do not converse about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger but converse about righteousness and piety...Private conversation is only from Satan that he may grieve those who have believed...”

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.

“Have you not considered those who were forbidden from private conversation [ridicule and conspiracy] and then return to that which they were forbidden and converse among themselves about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger?...O you who have believed, when you converse privately, do not converse about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger but converse about righteousness and piety...Private conversation is only from Satan that he may grieve those who have believed...”

This occurs when one fails to show true sincerity to 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.

“Have you not considered those who were forbidden from private conversation [ridicule and conspiracy] and then return to that which they were forbidden and converse among themselves about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger?...O you who have believed, when you converse privately, do not converse about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger but converse about righteousness and piety...Private conversation is only from Satan that he may grieve those who have believed...”

These verses also 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.”

“Have you not considered those who were forbidden from private conversation [ridicule and conspiracy] and then return to that which they were forbidden and converse among themselves about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger?...O you who have believed, when you converse privately, do not converse about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger but converse about righteousness and piety...Private conversation is only from Satan that he may grieve those who have believed...”

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 when they come to you, they greet you with that [word] by which Allāh does not greet you and say among themselves, "Why does Allāh not punish us for what we say?" Sufficient for them is Hell, which they will [enter to] burn, and wretched is the destination.”

Some non-muslims of Medina would intentionally mispronounce the Islamic greeting of peace to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Al Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 58:8, Page 148 and in Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6030.

A muslim must not behave in this manner as this contradicts the character of a true muslim and believer.

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 when they come to you, they greet you with that [word] by which Allāh does not greet you and say among themselves, "Why does Allāh not punish us for what we say?" Sufficient for them is Hell, which they will [enter to] burn, and wretched is the destination.”

Some non-muslims of Medina would intentionally mispronounce the Islamic greeting of peace to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Al Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 58:8, Page 148 and in Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6030.

A muslim must not behave in this manner as this contradicts the character of a true muslim and believer. Instead, one should correctly implement the Islamic greeting of peace to all.

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 when they come to you, they greet you with that [word] by which Allāh does not greet you and say among themselves, "Why does Allāh not punish us for what we say?" Sufficient for them is Hell, which they will [enter to] burn, and wretched is the destination.”

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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 when they come to you, they greet you with that [word] by which Allāh does not greet you and say among themselves, "Why does Allāh not punish us for what we say?" Sufficient for them is Hell, which they will [enter to] burn, and wretched is the destination.”

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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 himself 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 they come to you, they greet you with that [word] by which Allāh does not greet you and say among themselves, "Why does Allāh not punish us for what we say?" Sufficient for them is Hell, which they will [enter to] burn, and wretched is the destination.”

Some non-muslims of Medina would intentionally mispronounce the Islamic greeting of peace to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Al Wahidi's, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 58:8, Page 148 and in Hadiths such as the one found in *Sahih Bukhari*, number 6030.

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 come to you, they greet you with that [word] by which Allāh does not greet you and say among themselves, "Why does Allāh not punish us for what we say?" Sufficient for them is Hell, which they will [enter to] burn, and wretched is the destination.”

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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.

“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...fear Allāh...”

Piety 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.

“O you who have believed...fear Allāh, to whom you will be gathered.”

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.

“O you who have believed...fear Allāh, to whom you will be gathered.”

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.

“O you who have believed...fear Allāh, to whom you will be gathered.”

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.

“O you who have believed...fear Allāh, to whom you will be gathered.”

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.

“O you who have believed...fear Allāh, to whom you will be gathered.”

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.

“O you who have believed...fear Allāh, to whom you will be gathered.”

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.

“Private conversation is only from Satan that he may grieve those who have believed...”

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3775, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised two people not to converse in private if there is a third person present as this could make them feel uncomfortable.

As Islam promotes unity even small actions which can potentially damage relationships between people has been warned against. It is important to note, that this Hadith also includes conversing in a language the third person does not understand. A muslim’s duty is to always make others feel comfortable and this reason is why muslims have been advised to spread the Islamic greeting of peace to others. Conversing in private in this manner contradicts this duty as it can make others feel uncomfortable. Only in emergencies should two people converse secretly in the presence of a third person otherwise, they should wait until either the third person leaves or another joins the group so that the third person does not feel left out.

A muslim should implement this teaching namely, making others feel comfortable, in all aspects and situations of their life as long as it does not lead to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted.

“Private conversation is only from Satan that he may grieve those who have believed...”

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.

“Private conversation is only from Satan that he may grieve those who have believed...”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 290, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who spreads malicious gossip will not enter Paradise.

This is the one who spreads gossip whether it is true or not and it leads to problems between people, fractured and broken relationships. This is an evil characteristic and those who behave in such a manner are in fact human devils as this mentality belongs to none other than the Devil as he always strives to cause separation between people. Allah, the Exalted has cursed this type of person in the Holy Quran. Chapter 104 Al Humazah, verse 1:

“Woe to every scorner and mocker.”

How can one expect Allah, the Exalted, to fix their problems and bestow them with blessings if this curse has surrounded them? The only time tale bearing is acceptable is when one is warning others of a danger.

It is a duty on a muslim not to pay any attention to a tale bearer as they are wicked people who should not be trusted or believed. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance...”

A muslim should forbid the tale bearer from continuing with this evil characteristic and urge them to sincerely repent. As commanded in the Holy Quran a muslim should not harbour any ill will against the person that supposedly said something bad about them. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”

This same verse teaches muslims not to try to prove or disprove the tale bearer by spying on others. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“...And do not spy...”

Instead the tale bearer should be ignored. A muslim should not mention the information given to them by the tale bearer to another person or mention the tale bearer as this would make them a tale bearer as well.

Muslims should avoid tale bearing and the company of tale bearers as they can never be worthy of trust or companionship until they sincerely repent.

“...Satan that he may grieve those who have believed, but he will not harm them at all except by permission of Allāh. And upon Allāh let the believers rely.”

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 upon Allāh let the believers 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

themselves 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.

“...And upon Allāh let the believers 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.

“...And upon Allāh let the believers 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.

Chapter 58 – Al Mujadila, Verse 11

يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي
الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ ائْتُوا
فَأْتُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ
دَرَجَاتٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ



“O you who have believed, when you are told, “Space yourselves” in assemblies, then make space; Allah will make space for you. And when you are told, “Arise,” then arise; Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”

“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, when you are told, “Space yourselves” in assemblies, then make space; Allāh will make space for you...”

Muslims must always strive to be welcoming and courteous to others at all times. 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...”

“O you who have believed, when you are told, “Space yourselves” in assemblies, then make space; Allāh will make space for you...”

Muslims must always strive to be welcoming and courteous to others at all times.

Generally speaking, 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.

“O you who have believed, when you are told, “Space yourselves” in assemblies, then make space; Allāh will make space for you...”

This verse indicates the importance of making things easier for others. In this day and age due to ignorance it has become more difficult to fulfil the rights of people, such as one's parents. Even though a muslim has no excuse but to strive to fulfil them it is important for muslims to be merciful with each other. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6655, Allah, the Exalted, shows mercy to those who are merciful to others.

One aspect of this mercy is for a muslim not to demand their full rights from others. Instead, they should use the means such as their physical or financial strength to help themselves and make things easy for others. In some cases, when a muslim demands their full rights from others and they fail to fulfil them it may lead to their punishment. In order to be merciful to others they should therefore only demand their rights in some cases. This does not mean a muslim should not strive to fulfil the rights of others but it means they should try to overlook and excuse the people they have rights over. For example, a parent can excuse their adult child from a particular house chore and do it themselves if they possess the means to do so without troubling themselves, especially if their child returns home from work exhausted. This leniency and mercy will not only cause Allah, the Exalted, to be more merciful to them but it will also increase the love and respect people have for them. The one who always demands their full rights is not a sinner but they will lose out on this reward and outcome if they behave in this manner.

Muslims should make things easy for others and hope Allah, the Exalted, will make things easy for them in this world and in the next.

“O you who have believed...And when you are told, "Arise," then arise; Allāh will raise those who have believed among you...by degrees...”

This indicates the importance of supporting one’s verbal declaration of belief with actions.

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.”

“O you who have believed...And when you are told, "Arise," then arise; Allāh will raise those who have believed among you...by degrees...”

This indicates the importance of supporting one's verbal declaration of belief with actions.

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.

“O you who have believed...And when you are told, "Arise," then arise; Allāh will raise those who have believed among you...by degrees...”

This indicates the importance of supporting one’s verbal declaration of belief with actions. This is an aspect of being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and His 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.

“O you who have believed...And when you are told, "Arise," then arise; Allāh will raise those who have believed among you...by degrees...”

This indicates the importance of supporting one's verbal declaration of belief with actions. This is an aspect of being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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 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.

“O you who have believed...Allāh will raise those who have...were given knowledge, by degrees...”

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 219, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that learning one verse of the Holy Quran is better than offering 100 cycles of voluntary prayer. And learning a topic of Islamic knowledge even if one does not act on it is better than offering 1000 cycles of voluntary prayer.

Learning a verse includes studying and more importantly practically implementing its teachings in one's life. And it is important to note, a muslim will only gain this reward when they sincerely strive to act on the topic of knowledge they have learned and practically implement it when the opportunity presents itself. Only when one does not gain the opportunity to act on their topic of Islamic knowledge will they gain the reward of offering 1000 cycles of prayer even if they do not actually act on it. This is because Allah, the Exalted, judges and rewards people based on their intention and will therefore grant reward to those who would sincerely act when given the opportunity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

Finally, as indicated by the main Hadith under discussion gaining and acting on knowledge is far superior to voluntary worship. This is because the majority do not understand the Arabic language and are therefore less likely to change their behavior and obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in a positive way as they do not understand the language they use to worship Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, learning and acting on knowledge is much

more likely to inspire one to change for the better. This is the reason why some muslims spend decades performing voluntary worship yet, do not improve their behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, or people in the slightest. This by far is not the best course of action.

“O you who have believed...Allāh will raise those who have...were given knowledge, by degrees...”

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.

“O you who have believed...Allāh will raise those who have...were given knowledge, by degrees...”

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 is 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]...”

“O you who have believed...Allāh will raise those who have...were given knowledge, by degrees...”

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...Allāh will raise those who have...were given knowledge, by degrees...”

Gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge 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...”

“O you who have believed...Allāh will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allāh is Aware of what you do.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1897, that through the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, raises some people and degrades others. One must therefore learn, understand and act upon the Holy Quran in order to be raised by it.

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 is Aware of what you do.”

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 58 – Al Mujadila, Verses 12-13

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نَجَّيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَانِكُمْ
صَدَقَةٌ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ فَإِن لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ



ءَأَشْفَقْتُمْ أَن تَقْدِمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَانِكُمْ صَدَقْتِ فَإِذ لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا
وَتَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ؕ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ



“O you who have believed, when you [wish to] privately consult the Messenger, present before your consultation a charity. That is better for you and purer. But if you find not [the means] - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

Have you feared to present before your consultation charities? Then when you do not and Allah has forgiven you, then [at least] establish prayer and give zakāh and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”

“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...when you [wish to] privately consult the Messenger, present before your consultation a charity. That is better for you and purer. But if you find not [the means] - then indeed, Allāh is Forgiving...Have you feared to present before your consultation charities? Then when you do not and Allāh has forgiven you...”

These verses were revealed as the hypocrites of Medina would trouble the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly consulting him on trivial matters. This prevented the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, from attending to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who genuinely wanted to learn and act on Islamic knowledge. The miserly hypocrites then refrained from consulting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when the command to give charity was revealed even though they could afford to. In addition, the command was only in effect for a short period of time. This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 9, Page 531. When the command was abrogated the miserly hypocrites refrained from wasting his time further as people would realise their greed as they refrained from coming to him when the command was in effect. This command also warned the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, not to waste the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on trivial matters, which all refrained from. Finally, Allah, the Exalted, did not directly address the hypocrites in order to cover their faults thereby giving them an opportunity to sincerely repent.

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...”

“...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.

“...then [at least] establish 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 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.

“...then [at least] establish 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.

“...and give zakah...”

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.

“...and obey Allāh and His Messenger...”

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, 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 Allāh is Aware of what you do.”

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 58 – Al Mujadila, Verses 14-19

﴿ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِمَّا هُمْ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا مِنْهُمْ وَيَحْلِفُونَ عَلَى الْكَذِبِ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾ ١٤

﴿ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ ١٥

﴿ اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴾ ١٦

﴿ لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴾ ١٧

﴿ يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَحْلِفُونَ لَهُ كَمَا يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ ﴾ ١٨

أَسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَأَنسَهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ
الشَّيْطَانِ أَلَّا إِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allah has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying].

Allah has prepared for them a severe punishment. Indeed, it was evil that they were doing.

They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allah, and for them is a humiliating punishment.

Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allah at all. Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.

On the Day Allah will resurrect them all, and they will swear to Him as they swear to you and think that they are [standing] on something.

Unquestionably, it is they who are the liars.

Satan has overcome them and made them forget the remembrance of Allah. Those are the party of Satan. Unquestionably, the party of Satan - they will be the losers.”

“Have you not considered...”

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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allah has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be Muslims.

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.””

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allah has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims.

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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allah has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims.

This verse therefore 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.”

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allah has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them...”

Allah, the Exalted, was angered at the people of the book living in Medina as they recognised the truth of Islam yet rejected it for the sake of worldly gain.

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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... On the Day Allāh will resurrect them all, and they will swear to Him as they swear to you and think that they are [standing] on something. Unquestionably, it is they who are the liars.”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims.

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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]...On the Day Allāh will resurrect them all, and they will swear to Him as they swear to you and think that they are [standing] on something. Unquestionably, it is they who are the liars.”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims.

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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... On the Day Allāh will resurrect them all, and they will swear to Him as they swear to you and think that they are [standing] on something. Unquestionably, it is they who are the liars.”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims.

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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment.”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims.

They fooled the people of the book into believing they were supporting them and they tried to fool the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, into believing they were their loyal friends.

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 realty, this type of person is only unveiling their own faults to society even though they believe they are exposing the faults of others.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment.”

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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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment.”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims.

These verses could also mean that because of their behaviour they had averted themselves from the path of Allah, the Exalted. One must therefore avoid this by striving to obey Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

A muslim must remain 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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them in both worlds.

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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them 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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be Muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them 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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them in both worlds. One must avoid this behaviour and instead use the worldly blessings they were 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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be Muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them in both worlds. One must avoid this behaviour and instead use the worldly blessings they were 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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all. Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them in both worlds.

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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all... On the Day Allāh will resurrect them all...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them in both worlds.

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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all... On the Day Allāh will resurrect them all...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them in both worlds.

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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all... Satan has overcome them and made them forget the remembrance [obedience] of Allāh...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them in both worlds.

One behaves in this manner when they fail to show sincerity 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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all... Satan has overcome them and made them forget the remembrance [obedience] of Allāh...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them in both worlds.

One must learn and act on the teachings of Islam in order to avoid the traps of the Devil.

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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all... Satan has overcome them and made them forget the remembrance [obedience] of Allāh...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them in both worlds.

One must learn and act on the teachings of Islam in order to avoid the traps of the Devil.

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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all... Satan has overcome them and made them forget the remembrance [obedience] of Allāh...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them in both worlds.

One must learn and act on the teachings of Islam in order to avoid the traps of the Devil.

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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all... Satan has overcome them and made them forget the remembrance [obedience] of Allāh...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be Muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them in both worlds.

One must learn and act on the teachings of Islam in order to avoid the traps of the Devil.

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3294, advises that whichever path the second rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Umar Bin al-Khattab, 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 al-Khattab, 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 al-Khattab, 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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all... Satan has overcome them and made them forget the remembrance [obedience] of Allāh...”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them in both worlds.

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.

“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all... Satan has overcome them and made them forget the remembrance [obedience] of Allāh. Those are the party of Satan. Unquestionably, the party of Satan - they will be the losers.”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them in both worlds.

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 you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying]... They took their [false] oaths as a cover, so they averted [people] from the way of Allāh, and for them is a humiliating punishment. Never will their wealth or their children avail them against Allāh at all... Satan has overcome them and made them forget the remembrance [obedience] of Allāh. Those are the party of Satan. Unquestionably, the party of Satan - they will be the losers.”

The hypocrites would align themselves with the people of the book in Medina against Islam while openly claiming to be muslims. Whatever worldly things they obtained from behaving in this manner only became a source of stress for them in both worlds.

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 58 – Al Mujadila, Verses 20-21

﴿٢٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي الْأَذَلِّينَ

كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

﴿٢١﴾

“Indeed, the ones who oppose Allah and His Messenger - those will be among the most abased.

Allah has written [i.e., decreed], "I will surely overcome, I and My messengers." Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might.”

“Indeed, the ones who oppose Allah and His Messenger - those will be among the most abased. Allah has written [i.e., decreed], "I will surely overcome, I and My messengers."..."”

One can either sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and achieve superiority, peace and success in both worlds or turn away and fail 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.

“Indeed, the ones who oppose Allah and His Messenger - those will be among the most abased. Allah has written [i.e., decreed], "I will surely overcome, I and My messengers."...”

One can either sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and achieve superiority, peace and success in both worlds or turn away and fail in both worlds.

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, the ones who oppose Allah and His Messenger - those will be among the most abased. Allah has written [i.e., decreed], "I will surely overcome, I and My messengers."...”

One can either sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and achieve superiority, peace and success in both worlds or turn away and fail in both worlds.

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, the ones who oppose Allah and His Messenger - those will be among the most abased. Allah has written [i.e., decreed], "I will surely overcome, I and My messengers."...”

One can either sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and achieve superiority, peace and success in both worlds or turn away and fail 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.

“Indeed, the ones who oppose Allah and His Messenger - those will be among the most abased. Allah has written [i.e., decreed], “I will surely overcome, I and My messengers.”...”

One can either sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and achieve superiority, peace and success in both worlds or turn away and fail in both worlds.

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, the ones who oppose Allah and His Messenger - those will be among the most abased. Allah has written [i.e., decreed], "I will surely overcome, I and My messengers."...”

One can either sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and achieve superiority, peace and success in both worlds or turn away and fail 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.

“Indeed, the ones who oppose Allah and His Messenger - those will be among the most abased. Allah has written [i.e., decreed], "I will surely overcome, I and My messengers."...”

One can either sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and achieve superiority, peace and success in both worlds or turn away and fail in both worlds.

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, the ones who oppose Allah and His Messenger - those will be among the most abased. Allah has written [i.e., decreed], "I will surely overcome, I and My messengers."...”

One can either sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and achieve superiority, peace and success in both worlds or turn away and fail 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, the ones who oppose Allah and His Messenger - those will be among the most abased. Allah has written [i.e., decreed], "I will surely overcome, I and My messengers."...”

One can either sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and achieve superiority, peace and success in both worlds or turn away and fail 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.

“Indeed, the ones who oppose Allah and His Messenger - those will be among the most abased. Allah has written [i.e., decreed], "I will surely overcome, I and My messengers."...”

One can either sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and achieve superiority, peace and success in both worlds or turn away and fail 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, the ones who oppose Allah and His Messenger - those will be among the most abased. Allah has written [i.e., decreed], “I will surely overcome, I and My messengers.”...”

One can either sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and achieve superiority, peace and success in both worlds or turn away and fail 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.

“Indeed, the ones who oppose Allah and His Messenger - those will be among the most abased. Allah has written [i.e., decreed], "I will surely overcome, I and My messengers."...”

One can either sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and achieve superiority, peace and success in both worlds or turn away and fail in both worlds.

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, the ones who oppose Allah and His Messenger - those will be among the most abased. Allah has written [i.e., decreed], "I will surely overcome, I and My messengers."...”

One can either sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and achieve superiority, peace and success in both worlds or turn away and fail 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.

“...Indeed, Allāh is Powerful and 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 58 – Al Mujadila, Verse 22 of 22

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ
مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ
أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ
فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ وَيَدْخُلُهُمْ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا رَضِيَ
اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ
اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him. And We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him - those are the party of Allah. Unquestionably, the party of Allah - they are the successful.”

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah...”

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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day...”

The one who truly believes in Judgement Day 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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day...”

The one who truly believes in Judgement Day 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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day...”

The one who truly believes in Judgement Day will 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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others. This verse therefore 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.”

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person’s attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

In addition, 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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person’s attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

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.

The first is to love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This includes desiring what is best for others in both worldly and religious matters. This must be practically shown through one's actions meaning, supporting others financially, emotionally and physically within one's means. Counting one's favors to others not only cancels the reward but also proves their lack of love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, as this person only loves gaining praise and other forms of compensation from people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury...”

Any type of negative feelings towards others over worldly reasons, such as envy, contradicts loving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and must be avoided.

To sum up, this noble quality includes loving for others what one loves for themselves through actions not just words. This is an aspect of being a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person’s attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

This verse refers to certainty of faith which prevents one from being negatively influenced by others and instead encourages one to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

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...”

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

This verse refers to certainty of faith which prevents one from being negatively influenced by others and instead encourages one to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

The spirit could also be referring to divine revelation. This support is obtained when one fulfils the rights of the two types of divine revelation 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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...Allāh is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

This verse refers to certainty of faith which prevents one from being negatively influenced by others and instead encourages one to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

An aspect of achieving this level of faith is being pleased with the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to Allah, the Exalted, being pleased with them. One can achieve this by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge.

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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...Allāh is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him...”

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An aspect of achieving this level of faith is being pleased with the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to Allah, the Exalted, being pleased with them. One can achieve this by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge.

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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...Allāh is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him...”

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This verse refers to certainty of faith which prevents one from being negatively influenced by others and instead encourages one to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

An aspect of achieving this level of faith is being pleased with the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to Allah, the Exalted, being pleased with them. One can achieve this by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge.

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.”

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...Allāh is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him...”

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This verse refers to certainty of faith which prevents one from being negatively influenced by others and instead encourages one to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

An aspect of achieving this level of faith is being pleased with the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to Allah, the Exalted, being pleased with them. One can achieve this by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. One reaches this level when they remain 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.”

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...those are the party of Allāh. Unquestionably, the party of Allāh - they are the successful.”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

This verse refers to certainty of faith which prevents one from being negatively influenced by others and instead encourages one to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

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.””

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...those are the party of Allāh. Unquestionably, the party of Allāh - they are the successful.”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person’s attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

This verse refers to certainty of faith which prevents one from being negatively influenced by others and instead encourages one to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...those are the party of Allāh. Unquestionably, the party of Allāh - they are the successful.”

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This verse refers to certainty of faith which prevents one from being negatively influenced by others and instead encourages one to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...those are the party of Allāh. Unquestionably, the party of Allāh - they are the successful.”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person’s attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

This verse refers to certainty of faith which prevents one from being negatively influenced by others and instead encourages one to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him. And We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. Allāh is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him - those are the party of Allāh. Unquestionably, the party of Allāh - they are the successful.”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person’s attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

This verse refers to certainty of faith which prevents one from being negatively influenced by others and instead encourages one to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

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.

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 59 – Al Hashr, Verse 1

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ

“Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth exalts Allah, and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.”

“Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth exalts Allah...”

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.

“Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth exalts Allah...”

This includes those who are unwilling as their exalting Allah, the Exalted, includes the fact that they are powerless in the face of 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 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.

Chapter 59 – Al Hashr, Verses 2-5

هُوَ الَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ
لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ مَا ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ
مَانِعَتُهُمْ حُصُونُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَأَنْهَاهُمْ اللَّهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ
يَحْتَسِبُوا وَقَدَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ يُخْرِبُونَ بُيُوتَهُمْ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ
وَأَيْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ ﴿٢﴾

وَلَوْلَا أَنْ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجَلَاءَ لَعَذَّبَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَهُمْ فِي الْأَخِرَةِ عَذَابُ النَّارِ ﴿٣﴾

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُّوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ. وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ اللَّهَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٤﴾

مَا قَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ لِيْنَةٍ أَوْ تَرَكَتُمْوهَا قَائِمَةً عَلَى أُصُولِهَا
فِيَا ذُنَّ اللَّهَ وَلِيُخْزِيَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٥﴾

“It is He who expelled the ones who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture from their homes at the first gathering. You did not think they would leave, and they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allah; but [the decree of] Allah came upon them from where they had not expected, and He cast terror into their hearts [so] they destroyed their houses by their [own] hands and the hands of the believers. So take warning, O people of vision.

And if not that Allah had decreed for them evacuation, He would have punished them in [this] world, and for them in the Hereafter is the punishment of the Fire.

That is because they opposed Allah and His Messenger. And whoever opposes Allah - then indeed, Allah is severe in penalty.

Whatever you have cut down of [their] palm trees or left standing on their trunks - it was by permission of Allah and so He would disgrace the defiantly disobedient.”

“It is He who expelled the ones who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture from their homes at the first gathering. You did not think they would leave, and they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allah; but [the decree of] Allah came upon them from where they had not expected, and He cast terror into their hearts [so] they destroyed their houses by their [own] hands and the hands of the believers...And if not that Allah had decreed for them evacuation, He would have punished them in [this] world, and for them in the Hereafter is the punishment of the Fire. That is because they opposed Allah and His Messenger...Whatever you have cut down of [their] palm trees or left standing on their trunks - it was by permission of Allah and so He would disgrace the defiantly disobedient.”

In the fourth 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, visited a non-Muslim tribe, Banu Nadir, who he had previously made a pledge of support and peace with in order to ask for financial assistance. They replied that they would help him while secretly planning to assassinate him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, received divine revelation informing them of their treachery and he left and returned to Medina before they had a chance to act out their evil plan. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then dispatched a message to the Banu Nadir warning them to leave his territory and protection. The hypocrites urged the Banu Nadir to stay and offered their support to them. They claimed that if the Banu Nadir resisted against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they would support them, if the Banu Nadir fought they would fight with them and if they were expelled from the territory they would leave with them. This encouraged the Banu Nadir to stand against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ultimately the hypocrites did nothing when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, decided to fight against the Banu Nadir. When the

Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, besieged the Banu Nadir they requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to spare their blood and instead grant them safe passage so they could evacuate the area with their belongings. Instead of taking revenge against the Banu Nadir for their evil plan the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, allowed them to take whatever they could carry except weapons. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

The fact that some of their date palm trees were cut down proved to all that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not fighting for the sake of spoils of war. He only fought for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and the truth.

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 they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allāh; but [the decree of] Allāh came upon them from where they had not expected...”

In the fourth 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, a non-muslim tribe broke their allegiance with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by attempting to assassinate him. He gave them an opportunity to leave the area safely but when they refused he marched towards them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

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 they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allāh; but [the decree of] Allāh came upon them from where they had not expected...”

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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 they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allāh; but [the decree of] Allāh came upon them from where they had not expected, and He cast terror into their hearts [so] they destroyed their houses by their [own] hands and the hands of the believers. So take warning, O people of vision.”

In the fourth 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, a non-muslim tribe broke their allegiance with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by attempting to assassinate him. He gave them an opportunity to leave the area safely but when they refused he marched towards them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

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 they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allāh; but [the decree of] Allāh came upon them from where they had not expected, and He cast terror into their hearts [so] they destroyed their houses by their [own] hands and the hands of the believers. So take warning, O people of vision.”

In the fourth 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, a non-muslim tribe broke their allegiance with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by attempting to assassinate him. He gave them an opportunity to leave the area safely but when they refused he marched towards them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

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.

“...and they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allāh; but [the decree of] Allāh came upon them from where they had not expected...And if not that Allāh had decreed for them evacuation, He would have punished them in [this] world...”

In the fourth 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, a non-muslim tribe broke their allegiance with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by attempting to assassinate him. He gave them an opportunity to leave the area safely but when they refused he marched towards them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

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 they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allāh; but [the decree of] Allāh came upon them from where they had not expected...And if not that Allāh had decreed for them evacuation, He would have punished them in [this] world, and for them in the Hereafter is the punishment of the Fire.”

In the fourth 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, a non-muslim tribe broke their allegiance with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by attempting to assassinate him. He gave them an opportunity to leave the area safely but when they refused he marched towards them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

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 they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allāh; but [the decree of] Allāh came upon them from where they had not expected...And if not that Allāh had decreed for them evacuation, He would have punished them in [this] world, and for them in the Hereafter is the punishment of the Fire. That is because they opposed Allāh and His Messenger. And whoever opposes Allāh - then indeed, Allāh is severe in penalty.”

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One must avoid this attitude and outcome by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and His 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.

“...and they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allāh; but [the decree of] Allāh came upon them from where they had not expected...And if not that Allāh had decreed for them evacuation, He would have punished them in [this] world, and for them in the Hereafter is the punishment of the Fire. That is because they opposed Allāh and His Messenger. And whoever opposes Allāh - then indeed, Allāh is severe in penalty.”

In the fourth 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, a non-muslim tribe broke their allegiance with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by attempting to assassinate him. He gave them an opportunity to leave the area safely but when they refused he marched towards them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

One must avoid this attitude and outcome by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and His 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.

“...and they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allāh; but [the decree of] Allāh came upon them from where they had not expected...And if not that Allāh had decreed for them evacuation, He would have punished them in [this] world, and for them in the Hereafter is the punishment of the Fire. That is because they opposed Allāh and His Messenger. And whoever opposes Allāh - then indeed, Allāh is severe in penalty.”

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One must avoid this attitude and outcome by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and His 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.

“...and they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allāh; but [the decree of] Allāh came upon them from where they had not expected...And if not that Allāh had decreed for them evacuation, He would have punished them in [this] world, and for them in the Hereafter is the punishment of the Fire. That is because they opposed Allāh and His Messenger. And whoever opposes Allāh - then indeed, Allāh is severe in penalty.”

In the fourth 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, a non-muslim tribe broke their allegiance with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by attempting to assassinate him. He gave them an opportunity to leave the area safely but when they refused he marched towards them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

One must avoid this attitude and outcome by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and His 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.

“...and they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allāh; but [the decree of] Allāh came upon them from where they had not expected...And if not that Allāh had decreed for them evacuation, He would have punished them in [this] world, and for them in the Hereafter is the punishment of the Fire. That is because they opposed Allāh and His Messenger. And whoever opposes Allāh - then indeed, Allāh is severe in penalty.”

In the fourth 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, a non-muslim tribe broke their allegiance with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by attempting to assassinate him. He gave them an opportunity to leave the area safely but when they refused he marched towards them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

One must avoid this attitude and outcome by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and His 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 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 they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allāh; but [the decree of] Allāh came upon them from where they had not expected...And if not that Allāh had decreed for them evacuation, He would have punished them in [this] world, and for them in the Hereafter is the punishment of the Fire. That is because they opposed Allāh and His Messenger. And whoever opposes Allāh - then indeed, Allāh is severe in penalty.”

In the fourth 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, a non-muslim tribe broke their allegiance with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by attempting to assassinate him. He gave them an opportunity to leave the area safely but when they refused he marched towards them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

One must avoid this attitude and outcome by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and His 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.

Chapter 59 – Al Hashr, Verses 6-10

وَمَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْهُمْ فَمَا أَوْجَفْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ
خَيْلٍ وَلَا رِكَابٍ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَلِّطُ رُسُلَهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٦﴾

مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي
الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ
دَوْلَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ
وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ
﴿٧﴾

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ
يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ﴿٨﴾

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ
إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا
وَيُؤْتِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ
يُوقَ شَحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩﴾

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ
لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي
قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

“And what Allah restored [of property] to His Messenger from them - you did not spur for it [in an expedition] any horses or camels, but Allah gives His messengers power over whom He wills, and Allah is over all things competent.

And what Allah restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allah and for the Messenger and for [his] near relatives and orphans and the needy and the [stranded] traveler - so that it will not be a perpetual distribution among the rich from among you. And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty.

For the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties, seeking bounty from Allah and [His] approval and supporting

[the cause of] Allah and His Messenger, [there is also a share]. Those are the truthful.

And [also for] those who were settled in the Home [i.e. Medina] and [adopted] the faith before them. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what they [i.e., the emigrants] were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.

And [there is a share for] those who come after them, saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful."

“And what Allah restored [of property] to His Messenger from them - you did not spur for it [in an expedition] any horses or camels, but Allah gives His messengers power over whom He wills, and Allah is over all things competent. And what Allah restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns...”

In the fourth 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, visited a non-Muslim tribe, Banu Nadir, who he had previously made a pledge of support and peace with in order to ask for financial assistance. They replied that they would help him while secretly planning to assassinate him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, received divine revelation informing them of their treachery and he left and returned to Medina before they had a chance to act out their evil plan. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then dispatched a message to the Banu Nadir warning them to leave his territory and protection. The hypocrites urged the Banu Nadir to stay and offered their support to them. They claimed that if the Banu Nadir resisted against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they would support them, if the Banu Nadir fought they would fight with them and if they were expelled from the territory they would leave with them. This encouraged the Banu Nadir to stand against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ultimately the hypocrites did nothing when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, decided to fight against the Banu Nadir. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, besieged the Banu Nadir they requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to spare their blood and instead grant them safe passage so they could evacuate the area with their belongings. Instead of taking revenge against the Banu Nadir for their evil plan the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, allowed them to take

whatever they could carry except weapons. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

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 Allah 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.

“And what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and for [his] near relatives...”

The near relatives of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were prohibited from receiving charity therefore, Allah, the Exalted, allocated them a share from the spoils of war.

Generally speaking, this verse indicates the importance of upholding the ties of kinship.

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 what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and for...orphans...”

In this day and age it is very simple to aid orphans as one can support them by aiding them financially through charities without being in close proximity to them. A Muslim should know that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5304, that the one who takes care of an orphan will be in close proximity to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in Paradise. This Hadith alone should be enough of a reason for a Muslim to strive in aiding orphans as the cost of this is very little. In fact, most people spend more money on their monthly phone bill. Each Muslim should at least sponsor one orphan and encourage others to do the same.

“And what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and for...orphans and the needy...”

Generally speaking, this includes all types of aiding others not just financial aid. Any type of lawful need of others should be fulfilled according to one's strength and if a Muslim finds they cannot provide this aid then they should direct the needy person to someone who can help them. This will ensure they gain the same reward as the one who aids the needy person. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2671. Muslims must sincerely aid others in ways which benefit them solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, without desiring any payback from people as this only leads to their reward being cancelled. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury...”

Simply put, if a Muslim desires the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need then they must strive to aid others when they are in need. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893. But those who turn away from helping others may well be left stranded in their time of need.

If Muslims desire to demonstrate true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, so that they receive an increase in blessings then they must use the blessings they already possess correctly as prescribed by Islam. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

An aspect of this is helping the needy with whatever one possesses such as good advice.

One should understand a vital point which will prevent them from becoming proud. Namely, the help they offer the needy is not innately theirs. It was created and therefore belongs to Allah, the Exalted, and they must therefore use it according to the wishes of the true owner by helping the needy. In reality, the needy are doing their helper a favor as they will receive reward from Allah, the Exalted. If there was no one in need people would lose out on this method of gaining much reward.

“And what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and for...the [stranded] traveler...”

The traveler is the stranger who is stuck in a foreign land. Allah, the Exalted, encourages Muslims to give them some of their wealth in order to help them on their journey because they might need help and have great expenses. The one who possesses wealth should show compassion towards this stranger and help them in whatever way they can even if that is by giving them food or a means of transportation or protecting them from any wrongdoing that may occur to them during their journey.

In addition, this can include anyone a Muslim encounters outside their home. In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4815, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people must fulfill the rights of the public road when they meet up in public.

The first thing advised in this Hadith is that Muslims should lower their gaze and not look at things which are unlawful to them. In fact, one should protect each organ of their body such as their tongue and ears in the same way.

The next thing advised in this Hadith is that they should keep their harm away from others. This includes both harm in the form of speech, such as

foul language and backbiting and harm caused through physical actions. In fact, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their physical and verbal harm away from people and their possessions. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that one should return the Islamic greeting of peace to others. This includes initiating the Islamic greeting of peace through one's words and showing peace to others in one's actions. It is pure hypocrisy to extend peace to others through one's words and then harm them through their actions.

Finally, the main Hadith under discussion advises Muslim to command good and forbid evil. This should be carried out according to the three levels discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2172. The highest level is to do it with one's actions within the bounds of the law. The next level is to do it with one's words. And the lowest level is to do it with one's heart meaning, secretly. This duty must always be fulfilled according to Islamic knowledge and in a gentle way. Often Muslims advise the correct thing but as they do it in a harsh way they only drive people further away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is therefore vital to combine knowledge with kind behavior so that the advice affects others in a positive way.

To conclude, it is important to note a Muslim should adopt and show these characteristics towards all people irrespective of their faith.

“And what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and for [his] near relatives and orphans and the needy and the [stranded] traveler - so that it will not be a perpetual distribution among the rich from among you...And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”

When one uses the blessings they have been granted, such as their wealth, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, it will ensure everyone within society benefits. When one refrains from this by hoarding their blessings or restricting the benefits to their own relatives and friends then the wider society fails to gain any benefit. It is important to note that when the wider society benefits, everyone within the society benefits. In addition, using blessings correctly is a sign that one has overcome the stinginess within their soul.

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 Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and for [his] near relatives and orphans and the needy and the [stranded] traveler - so that it will not be a perpetual distribution among the rich from among you...And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”

When one uses the blessings they have been granted, such as their wealth, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, it will ensure everyone within society benefits. When one refrains from this by hoarding their blessings or restricting the benefits to their own relatives and friends then the wider society fails to gain any benefit. It is important to note that when the wider society benefits, everyone within the society benefits. In addition, using blessings correctly is a sign that one has overcome the stinginess within their soul.

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

This is an aspect of fearing Allah, the Exalted, and being sincere to 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 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 severe in penalty.”

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 what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...For the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties [at Mecca], seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] approval...”

Making sacrifices in order to please 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 what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...For the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties [at Mecca], seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] approval and supporting [the cause of] Allāh and His Messenger. Those are the truthful.”

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, this verse mentions the migration 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 what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...For the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties [at Mecca], seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] approval and supporting [the cause of] Allāh and His Messenger. Those are the truthful.”

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 what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...For the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties [at Mecca], seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] approval and supporting [the cause of] Allāh and His Messenger. Those are the truthful.”

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 what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...For the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties [at Mecca], seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] approval and supporting [the cause of] Allāh and His Messenger. Those are the truthful.”

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 what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...For the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties [at Mecca], seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] approval and supporting [the cause of] Allāh and His Messenger. Those are the truthful.”

These verses are connected to chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 92:

“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it.”

This verse makes it clear that a person cannot be a true believer meaning, they will possess a defect in their faith, until they are willing to dedicate the things they love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Even though many believe this verse applies to wealth but it in fact means much more. It includes every blessing which a muslim likes and loves. For example, muslims are happy to dedicate their precious time on the things which please them. But they refuse to dedicate time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, beyond the obligatory duties which barely takes an hour or two in one's day. Countless muslims are happy to dedicate their physical strength in different pleasurable activities yet, many of them refuse to dedicate it to the things which please Allah, the Exalted, such as voluntary fasting. More commonly, people are happy to strive in things which they desire like obtaining excess wealth which they do not need even if it means they have to do overtime and give up their sleep yet how many strive in this way in

the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience? How many give up their precious sleep in order to offer voluntary prayers?

It is strange that muslims desire lawful worldly and religious blessings yet, overlook a simple fact. That they will only gain these things when they dedicate the blessings they possess in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. How can they dedicate minimal things to Him and still expect to achieve all their dreams? This attitude is truly strange.

“And what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...For the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties [at Mecca], seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] approval and supporting [the cause of] Allāh and His Messenger. Those are the truthful.”

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 what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...[also for] those who were settled in the Home [Medina] and [adopted] the faith before them [before the migration]. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what they [the emigrants] were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation...”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, established brotherhood between his fellow Emigrants, the Muhajireen and the Helpers, the Ansars, may Allah be pleased with them all. He advised them to become brothers in the cause of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 215.

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...”

“And what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...[also for] those who were settled in the Home [Medina] and [adopted] the faith before them [before the migration]. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what they [the emigrants] were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation...”

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 what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...[also for] those who were settled in the Home [Medina] and [adopted] the faith before them [before the migration]. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what they [the emigrants] were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation...”

Their behaviour is the pinnacle 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 what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...[also for] those who were settled in the Home [Medina] and [adopted] the faith before them [before the migration]. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what they [the emigrants] were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation...”

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.

The first is to love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This includes desiring what is best for others in both worldly and religious matters. This must be practically shown through one's actions meaning, supporting others financially, emotionally and physically within one's means. Counting one's favors to others not only cancels the reward but also proves their lack of love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, as this person only loves gaining praise and other forms of compensation from people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury...”

Any type of negative feelings towards others over worldly reasons, such as envy, contradicts loving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and must be avoided.

To sum up, this noble quality includes loving for others what one loves for themselves through actions not just words. This is an aspect of being a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is giving for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This refers to every blessing one can give to others, such as physical and emotional support not just wealth. When one gives they will do so according to the teachings of Islam meaning, in matters pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as giving sincere advice. In fact, this is an aspect of being sincere to others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes giving and sharing these blessings with others without counting one's favors as this proves they gave in order to receive something from others. Chapter 76 Al Insan, verse 9:

“[Saying], “We feed you only for the face [i.e., approval] of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude.””

“And what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...[also for] those who were settled in the Home [Medina] and [adopted] the faith before them [before the migration]. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what they [the emigrants] were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation...”

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.

“And what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...[also for] those who were settled in the Home [Medina] and [adopted] the faith before them [before the migration]. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what they [the emigrants] were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation...”

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 whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”

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...”

“...And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”

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 whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”

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 whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2511, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned Muslims against greed. This 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.

“...And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”

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 whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”

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.

“...And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”

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 whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”

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 what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...[there is a share for] those who come after them [the migrants and helpers from Medina], saying, "Our Lord, forgive us..."”

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 what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...[there is a share for] those who come after them [the migrants and helpers from Medina], saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith..."”

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.

“And what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...[there is a share for] those who come after them [the migrants and helpers from Medina], saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed..."”

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4860, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned people against speaking negatively about others as this causes ill feelings towards them in people's hearts.

It is often observed that families especially, from the Asian community, become broken over time. This is one the biggest complaints family members, such as parents often have. They wonder why their children have become separated even though they were once firmly together.

One of the main reasons the relationships between relatives become fractured is because someone has spoken negatively about a person's relative to them. This is often done by a family member. For example, a mother will speak negatively about her son to her other child. This leads to enmity between the two relatives and over time it builds up and creates a wedge between the two. Those who were once like one person become like strangers to one another.

It is important to understand that people are not Angels. Except for a very few, when a negative thing is said to a person about another they will get affected by it even if they do not desire this to occur. This enmity still occurs even if the initial person who spoke negatively about someone's relative does not intend to create a wedge between relatives. Some often act in this way out of habit and are not trying to damage relationships. For example, parents often adopt this habit and there is no doubt they do not desire the relationships of their children to become fractured or broken.

This attitude has such a serious impact on people's mentality that it also affects relatives that very rarely see or converse with each other. For example, a person will mention negative things about a person's relative to them even though their relative may not even live in the same country as them. This behaviour implants enmity within their heart and with the passing of time they will find that they dislike their distant relative even though they barely know them.

This issue often occurs when two people discuss negative things about others in front of other people. For example, parents may discuss negative things about their relatives in front of their children. Even though, they are not telling their children directly none the less it still affects their hearts. If one truly reflected for a moment they will realise that the majority of the ill feelings they have towards others were not caused by what that person did or said to them directly. In most cases, it occurred because of a third party who mentioned something negative about that person to them.

In cases where one is trying to warn another of some danger then it is perfectly acceptable to mention another person in a negative way. If one is trying to teach another person a lesson for example, if a mother desires to teach one of her children not to behave as their sibling did they then should follow the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and mention the negative thing without naming the person. An example of this beautiful mentality is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6979. Mentioning a negative thing without naming the person is good enough to teach someone a lesson.

To conclude, muslims should ponder deeply before speaking negatively about their relatives or others, privately or publically. Otherwise, they may well find as time passes their family becomes separated and emotionally distant from one another.

“And what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...[there is a share for] those who come after them [the migrants and helpers from Medina], saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed..."”

These verses indicate the importance of unity.

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 what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...[there is a share for] those who come after them [the migrants and helpers from Medina], saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward 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.

“And what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...[there is a share for] those who come after them [the migrants and helpers from Medina], saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed..."”

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.

“And what Allāh restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allāh and for the Messenger and...[there is a share for] those who come after them [the migrants and helpers from Medina], saying, "...Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and 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 59 – Al Hashr, Verses 11-17

﴿ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا يَقُولُونَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَئِن أُخْرِجْتُمْ لَنَخْرُجَنَّ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا نُطِيعُ فِيكُمْ أَحَدًا أَبَدًا وَإِن قُوتِلْتُمْ لَنَنصُرَنَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴾ ١١

لَئِن أُخْرِجُوا لَا يَخْرُجُونَ مَعَهُمْ وَلَئِن قُوتِلُوا لَا يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ
وَلَئِن نَّصَرُوهُمْ لَيُوَلُّنَّ الْأَدْبَرَ ثُمَّ لَا يُصَرُّونَ ﴿١٢﴾

لَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ رَهْبَةً فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

لَا يُقَالُونَكُمْ جَمِيعًا إِلَّا فِي قُرَى مُحَصَّنَةٍ أَوْ مِنْ
وَرَاءِ جُدُرٍ بَأْسُهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ شَدِيدٌ تَحْسَبُهُمْ جَمِيعًا
وَقُلُوبُهُمْ شَتَّى ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

كَمَثَلِ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيبًا ذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾

كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ
إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنْكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

فَكَانَ عَاقِبَتُهُمَا أَنَّهُمَا فِي النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَٰلِكَ
جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

"Have you not considered those who practice hypocrisy, saying to their brothers [i.e., associates] who have disbelieved among the People of the Scripture, "If you are expelled, we will surely leave with you, and we will not

obey, in regard to you, anyone - ever; and if you are fought, we will surely aid you." But Allah testifies that they are liars.

If they are expelled, they will not leave with them, and if they are fought, they will not aid them. And [even] if they should aid them, they will surely turn their backs; then [thereafter] they will not be aided.

You [believers] are more fearful within their breasts than Allah. That is because they are a people who do not understand.

They will not fight you all except within fortified cities or from behind walls. Their violence [i.e., enmity] among themselves is severe. You think they are together, but their hearts are diverse. That is because they are a people who do not reason.

[Theirs is] like the example of those shortly before them: they tasted the bad consequence of their affair, and they will have a painful punishment."

[The hypocrites are] like the example of Satan when he says to man, "Disbelieve." But when he disbelieves, he says, "Indeed, I am disassociated from you. Indeed, I fear Allah, Lord of the worlds."

So the outcome for both of them is that they will be in the Fire, abiding eternally therein. And that is the recompense of the wrongdoers."

“Have you not considered...”

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.

“Have you not considered those who practice hypocrisy, saying to their brothers [i.e., associates] who have disbelieved among the People of the Scripture, "If you are expelled, we will surely leave with you, and we will not obey, in regard to you, anyone - ever; and if you are fought, we will surely aid you." But Allāh testifies that they are liars. If they are expelled, they will not leave with them, and if they are fought, they will not aid them. And [even] if they should aid them, they will surely turn their backs; then [thereafter] they will not be aided... They will not fight you all except within fortified cities or from behind walls... [Theirs is] like the example of those shortly before them: they tasted the bad consequence of their affair, and they will have a painful punishment. [The hypocrites are] like the example of Satan when he says to man, "Disbelieve." But when he disbelieves, he says, "Indeed, I am disassociated from you. Indeed, I fear Allah, Lord of the worlds." So the outcome for both of them is that they will be in the Fire, abiding eternally therein. And that is the recompense of the wrongdoers.”

In the fourth 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, visited a non-Muslim tribe, Banu Nadir, who he had previously made a pledge of support and peace with in order to ask for financial assistance. They replied that they would help him while secretly planning to assassinate him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, received divine revelation informing them of their treachery and he left and returned to Medina before they had a chance to act out their evil plan. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then dispatched a message to the Banu Nadir warning them to leave his territory and protection. The hypocrites urged the Banu Nadir to stay and offered their support to them. They claimed that if the Banu Nadir resisted against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they would support them, if the Banu Nadir fought they would

fight with them and if they were expelled from the territory they would leave with them. This encouraged the Banu Nadir to stand against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ultimately the hypocrites did nothing when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, decided to fight against the Banu Nadir. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

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.”

The final part of the verses under discussion could be referring to the Battle of Badr, where the non-Muslims of Mecca 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.

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 final part of the verses under discussion could also be referring to the Banu Qaynuqa, a non-muslim tribe who lived in Medina.

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina a Jewish tribe, the Banu Qaynuqa, who were living in Medina broke their pact and fought against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Due to worldly benefits the leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, who had allied with the Banu Qaynuqa before the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to Medina, insisted that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, avoid harming them and he stayed loyal to them even though they broke their pact with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whereas a Companion, Ubada Bin Samit, may Allah be pleased with him, who also had an old alliance with Banu Qaynuqa openly renounced his alliance with them and instead reaffirmed his alliance with Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 51:

“O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to

them among you - then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people.”

And chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 56:

“And whoever is an ally of Allah and His Messenger and those who have believed - indeed, the party of Allah - they will be the predominant.”

Ultimately, the Banu Qaynuqa were granted permission to leave Medina peacefully. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 3-4.

“...But Allāh testifies that they are liars.”

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.

“...But Allāh testifies that they are liars.”

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.

“You [believers] are more fearful within their [hypocrites] breasts than Allāh. That is because they are a people who do not understand.”

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2511, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned muslims not to behave cowardly. This attitude prevents trust in Allah, the Exalted, and in what He has promised, such as one's guaranteed provision. It can cause one to seek their provision in doubtful and unlawful means which will destroy a person in both worlds. Allah, the Exalted, does not accept any deed which has a foundation in the unlawful. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

In addition, being a coward prevents one from striving against the Devil and one's inner Devil which requires genuine struggle. This will lead one to fail in obeying Allah, the Exalted, which 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. And it will therefore prevent them from fulfilling the rights of people. Both worldly and religious success requires effort and time. A coward will be too afraid to undertake this struggle and will instead be lazy which leads to failure in both worldly and religious matters.

“You [believers] are more fearful within their [hypocrites] breasts than Allāh. That is because they are a people who do not understand.”

This attitude is also adopted by the one who possesses weak 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.

“You [believers] are more fearful within their [hypocrites] breasts than Allāh. That is because they are a people who do not understand.”

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.

“You [believers] are more fearful within their [hypocrites] breasts than Allāh. That is because they are a people who do not understand.”

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...”

“...Their violence [i.e., enmity] among themselves is severe. You think they are together, but their hearts are diverse. That is because they are a people who do not reason.”

This verse could be referring to the hypocrites or the people of the book living in Medina.

This occurs when people are connected by worldly bonds.

With the passing of time people often 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...”

“...Their violence [i.e., enmity] among themselves is severe. You think they are together, but their hearts are diverse. That is because they are a people who do not reason.”

This verse could be referring to the hypocrites or the people of the book living in Medina.

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.

“...Their violence [i.e., enmity] among themselves is severe. You think they are together, but their hearts are diverse. That is because they are a people who do not reason.”

This verse could be referring to the hypocrites or the people of the book living in Medina.

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.

“...Their violence [i.e., enmity] among themselves is severe. You think they are together, but their hearts are diverse. That is because they are a people who do not reason.”

This verse could be referring to the hypocrites or the people of the book living in Medina.

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.

“...Their violence [i.e., enmity] among themselves is severe. You think they are together, but their hearts are diverse. That is because they are a people who do not reason.”

This verse could be referring to the hypocrites or the people of the book living in Medina.

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.

“...Their violence [i.e., enmity] among themselves is severe. You think they are together, but their hearts are diverse. That is because they are a people who do not reason.”

This verse could be referring to the hypocrites or the people of the book living in Medina.

Muslims must avoid this behaviour as it leads to destruction in both worlds.

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.

“...Their violence [i.e., enmity] among themselves is severe. You think they are together, but their hearts are diverse. That is because they are a people who do not reason.”

This verse could be referring to the hypocrites or the people of the book living in Medina.

Muslims must avoid this behaviour as it leads to destruction in both worlds.

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.

“...Their violence [i.e., enmity] among themselves is severe. You think they are together, but their hearts are diverse. That is because they are a people who do not reason.”

This verse could be referring to the hypocrites or the people of the book living in Medina.

Muslims must avoid this behaviour as it leads to destruction in both worlds.

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.

“...Their violence [i.e., enmity] among themselves is severe. You think they are together, but their hearts are diverse. That is because they are a people who do not reason.”

This verse could be referring to the hypocrites or the people of the book living in Medina.

Muslims must avoid this behaviour as it leads to destruction 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.

“[Theirs is] like the example of those shortly before them: they tasted the bad consequence of their affair, and they will have a painful punishment.”

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.

“[Theirs is] like the example of those shortly before them: they tasted the bad consequence of their affair, and they 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.

“[The hypocrites are] like the example of Satan when he says to man, "Disbelieve." But when he disbelieves, he says, "Indeed, I am disassociated from you. Indeed, I fear Allāh, Lord of the worlds.””

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.”

“[The hypocrites are] like the example of Satan when he says to man, "Disbelieve." But when he disbelieves, he says, "Indeed, I am disassociated from you. Indeed, I fear Allāh, Lord of the worlds."”

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.

“[The hypocrites are] like the example of Satan when he says to man, "Disbelieve." But when he disbelieves, he says, "Indeed, I am disassociated from you. Indeed, I fear Allāh, Lord of the worlds.””

This verse is 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?

“[The hypocrites are] like the example of Satan when he says to man, "Disbelieve." But when he disbelieves, he says, "Indeed, I am disassociated from you. Indeed, I fear Allāh, Lord of the worlds.””

In reality, if the Devil truly feared Allah, the Exalted, he would not commit sins nor misguide people. His fear is void of substance as it will only affect him when he feels the punishment of Allah, the Exalted, is near. Muslims must avoid this behaviour as this type of fear has no benefit in either worlds.

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.

“[The hypocrites are] like the example of Satan when he says to man, "Disbelieve." But when he disbelieves, he says, "Indeed, I am disassociated from you. Indeed, I fear Allāh, Lord of the worlds." So the outcome for both of them [Satan and his follower] is that they will be in the Fire, abiding eternally therein. And that is the recompense of the wrongdoers.”

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.

“[The hypocrites are] like the example of Satan when he says to man, "Disbelieve." But when he disbelieves, he says, "Indeed, I am disassociated from you. Indeed, I fear Allāh, Lord of the worlds." So the outcome for both of them [Satan and his follower] is that they will be in the Fire, abiding eternally therein. And that is the recompense of the wrongdoers.”

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 59 – Al Hashr, Verses 18-19

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ
لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنفُسَهُمْ ؕ أُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

“O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow [Judgement Day]- and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Aware of what you do.

And be not like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.”

“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, 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.

***“...And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow
[Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...”***

The fact that Judgement Day has been referred to as tomorrow indicates how close it really is. Even if some believe it is far away none the less, one's death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their final judgement begins.

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 let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow
[Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...”***

The fact that Judgement Day has been referred to as tomorrow indicates how close it really is. Even if some believe it is far away none the less, one's death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their final judgement begins.

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 let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow
[Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...”***

The fact that Judgement Day has been referred to as tomorrow indicates how close it really is. Even if some believe it is far away none the less, one's death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their final judgement begins.

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 let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow
[Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...”***

The fact that Judgement Day has been referred to as tomorrow indicates how close it really is. Even if some believe it is far away none the less, one's death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their final judgement begins.

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 let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow
[Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...”***

The fact that Judgement Day has been referred to as tomorrow indicates how close it really is. Even if some believe it is far away none the less, one's death is certainly not. In reality, when one dies their final judgement begins.

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 let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow
[Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...”***

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.

***“...And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow
[Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6514, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that two things abandon a deceased at their grave and only one thing remains with them. The two things which abandon them are their family and wealth and the only thing which remains with them are their deeds.

Throughout history people have always concentrated the majority of their efforts to obtaining wealth and a happy family. Even though Islam does not prohibit these things as they may be required to fulfill one's responsibilities for example, wealth is required to support one's dependents. Islam only discourages Muslims from striving for them beyond their needs and prioritizing them over more important duties, such as performing righteous deeds.

One must strive to obtain the needed wealth to fulfill their responsibilities according to the teachings of Islam and obtain a family which will encourage them to prepare for the hereafter. These are both considered good deeds when utilized in such a manner. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6373. This is the sign of an intelligent person who gives priority to the thing which will endure and support them in their moment of need namely, righteous deeds. On the other hand the one who allows their wealth and relatives to preoccupy them from fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refraining from His prohibitions are described as losers in the Holy Quran. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verse 9:

“O you who have believed, let not your wealth and your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whoever does that - then those are the losers.”

Some may incorrectly believe they are close to Allah, the Exalted, as He has bestowed them with great wealth and family. But Allah, the Exalted, clears their confusion by declaring that the one who is dearer and nearer to Him are those who believe and perform righteous deeds. Chapter 34 Saba, verse 37:

“And it is not your wealth or your children that bring you nearer to Us in position, but it is [by being] one who has believed and done righteousness...”

In another place of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, warns mankind that their wealth and relatives will not benefit them in the hereafter unless they reach the hereafter with a sound 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 definition of the sound heart is lengthy simply put one cannot obtain it until they 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.

One's wealth can only benefit them in the hereafter if they send it ahead of them by spending it on ongoing charity projects. This is confirmed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376. The same Hadith informs mankind that a righteous child praying for the forgiveness of their deceased parent will be accepted also. Unfortunately, in this day and age many children are too busy seeking their inheritance to supplicate for their deceased parents.

It important to understand that raising a righteous child who supplicates for their deceased parent is not possible to achieve if the parents do not perform righteous deeds themselves during their lives. Secondly, it is not the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, or his Companions, May Allah be pleased with them all, to abstain from performing righteous deeds and hope others will pray for them after they depart from this world. One should strive for righteous deeds while they are alive and then hope others will pray for them after they pass away.

It is important to understand that only the wealth one sends forward will benefit them. This can be achieved by spending on fulfilling one's

responsibilities, such as the education of their children. All wealth spent incorrectly will become a burden for the owner and may well lead to their punishment. Those who withhold the obligatory charity out of greed have been warned of dreadful punishments. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that a person who commits this grave sin on the Day of Judgement will encounter a huge poisonous snake which will wrap around them and bite them continuously. 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...”

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1658, warns that on the Day of Judgment the gold and silver a person owned will be heated up in the flames of Hell and their bodies will be branded with it if they failed to donate the obligatory charity due on it.

Any wealth left behind by the deceased will be left to others to enjoy while the deceased is held accountable for collecting it. It is important to note, if a person knowingly leaves wealth to someone who is not fit to possess it and thus misuses it then the deceased may well be held accountable for this also. Conversely, if one leaves wealth behind to someone who spends it correctly then the deceased will face much regret on the Day of Judgment when they observe the great reward given to the one who spent it correctly.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7420, that in reality a person can only use their wealth in three ways. The first is the wealth which is spent on their food. The second is the wealth spent on their clothes and the final wealth is what they spend in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. All other wealth is left behind for other people to enjoy while the deceased is held accountable for collecting it.

Hoarding and incorrectly spending wealth inspires one to love the material world and dislike the hereafter as they dislike leaving their much loved wealth behind, which will occur when they die. The one who dislikes the hereafter will not adequately prepare for it.

In addition, if one desires to adopt true piety then they must be ready to spend their wealth for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 92:

“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love...”

In reality, wealth is a strange companion as it only benefits someone when it leaves them meaning, when it is spent in the correct way.

A person would be labelled a fool if they went on a long trip without any provisions. Similarly, the one who does not send their wealth ahead in the form of provisions for their long journey to the hereafter is also foolish.

There is no doubt that one of the greatest pains a person feels at the time of death is when they realise that they are leaving behind their hard earned wealth and journeying towards the hereafter empty handed. A muslim should avoid this outcome at all costs.

Performing righteous deeds is the only way one prepares for their grave as no other things of comfort will be found there. It is in fact the means for preparing one's eternal home in the hereafter. Therefore, this preparation should take priority over preparing for the temporal material world.

A person would be labelled a fool if they had two homes and dedicated the majority of their efforts on beautifying the home which they will spend less time in. Similarly, if a muslim dedicates more time and effort in beautifying their temporal home in this world over the eternal home of the hereafter they too are simply foolish. This is the attitude of some even though they admit and believe their stay in this world is short and for an unknown length whereas, their stay in the hereafter will be eternal.

This attitude indicates a lack of certainty of faith and it is therefore vital for anyone who shares this mentality to seek and act on Islamic knowledge in order to strengthen their certainty of faith before they reach the hereafter bereft of all good.

The one who prepares for their grave with sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience will find that their good deeds provide comfort for them whereas, the sins their accumulated will only make their stay in the dark grave worse. A muslim should therefore perform good deeds during their strength and ability before their time of weakness arrives. Each muslim should recognise the reality indicated in the main Hadith and act correctly with their possessions before they reach a time when their request to be given more time to perform righteous deeds will be denied. 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...”

They should reflect now on their deeds so that they can sincerely repent from sins and strive harder to perform righteous deeds before a day arrives when reflecting 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?”

Let each one ponder over those who passed away before them and their inability to perform more righteous deeds to comfort them in their moment of need. Make haste before this time arrives and prepare for the inevitable. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 99:

“And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty [i.e., death].”

***“...And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow
[Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...”***

One must prepare for the Day of 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 let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow
[Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...”***

One must prepare for the Day of Judgement 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.

***“...And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow
[Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...”***

One must prepare for the Day of 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 let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow [Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...And be not like those who forgot Allāh, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.”

One must prepare for the Day of Judgement by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The one who fails to behave in this manner will not fulfil the purpose of their creation. This will prevent them from obtaining 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 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.

“...And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow [Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...And be not like those who forgot Allāh, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.”

One must prepare for the Day of Judgement by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The one who fails to behave in this manner will not fulfil the purpose of their creation. This will prevent them from obtaining peace and success 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.

“...And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow [Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...And be not like those who forgot Allāh, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.”

One must prepare for the Day of Judgement by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The one who fails to behave in this manner will not fulfil the purpose of their creation. This will prevent them from obtaining 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.

“...And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow [Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...And be not like those who forgot Allāh, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.”

One must prepare for the Day of Judgement by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The one who fails to behave in this manner will not fulfil the purpose of their creation. This will prevent them from obtaining 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.

“...And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow [Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...And be not like those who forgot Allāh, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.”

One must prepare for the Day of Judgement by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The one who fails to behave in this manner will not fulfil the purpose of their creation. This will prevent them from obtaining peace and success in both worlds.

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 let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow [Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...And be not like those who forgot Allāh, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.”

One must prepare for the Day of Judgement by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The one who fails to behave in this manner will not fulfil the purpose of their creation. This will prevent them from obtaining peace and success 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.

“...And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow [Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...And be not like those who forgot Allāh, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.”

One must prepare for the Day of Judgement by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The one who fails to behave in this manner will not fulfil the purpose of their creation. This will prevent them from obtaining peace and success in both worlds.

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 let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow [Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...And be not like those who forgot Allāh, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.”

One must prepare for the Day of Judgement by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The one who fails to behave in this manner will not fulfil the purpose of their creation. This will prevent them from obtaining peace and success in both worlds.

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 let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow [Judgement Day] - and fear Allāh...And be not like those who forgot Allāh, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.”

One must prepare for the Day of Judgement by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The one who fails to behave in this manner will not fulfil the purpose of their creation. This will prevent them from obtaining peace and success in both worlds.

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 is Aware of what you do.”

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 59 – Al Hashr, Verse 20

لَا يَسْتَوِي أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابُ
الْجَنَّةِ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

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

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

Just like they are different in the hereafter they are different in this world. The one who desires Paradise must sincerely strive for it 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.

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

Just like they are different in the hereafter they are different in this world. The one who desires Paradise must sincerely strive for it 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.

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

Just like they are different in the hereafter they are different in this world. The one who desires Paradise must sincerely strive for it by using the blessings they have 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.

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

Just like they are different in the hereafter they are different in this world. The one who desires Paradise must sincerely strive for it by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. One should not perform the deeds which takes a person to Hell yet hope for Paradise.

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.”

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

Just like they are different in the hereafter they are different in this world. The one who desires Paradise must sincerely strive for it by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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].”

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Just like they are different in the hereafter they are different in this world. The one who desires Paradise must sincerely strive for it by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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 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.

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

Just like they are different in the hereafter they are different in this world. The one who desires Paradise must sincerely strive for it by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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.””

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

Just like they are different in the hereafter they are different in this world. The one who desires Paradise must sincerely strive for it by using the blessings they have 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.

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

Just like they are different in the hereafter they are different in this world. The one who desires Paradise must sincerely strive for it by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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.

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

Just like they are different in the hereafter they are different in this world. The one who desires Paradise must sincerely strive for it by using the blessings they have 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.

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

Just like they are different in the hereafter they are different in this world. The one who desires Paradise must sincerely strive for it by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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 59 – Al Hashr, Verse 21

لَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ لَرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا
مُتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَلُ نَضْرِبُهَا
لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْفَكِرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

“If We had sent down this Quran upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and splitting from fear of Allah. And these examples We present to the people that perhaps they will give thought.”

“If We had sent down this Quran upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and splitting from fear of Allah. And these examples We present to the people that perhaps they will give thought.”

This verse encourages people not to become heedless towards the Holy Quran so that they fail to be rightly guided by it. This is achieved 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.

“If We had sent down this Quran upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and splitting from fear of Allah. And these examples We present to the people that perhaps they will give thought.”

This verse encourages people not to become heedless towards the Holy Quran so that they fail to be rightly guided by it. The one who is unaffected by the Holy Quran possesses a spiritual heart harder than stone. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

“Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder. For indeed, there are stones from which rivers burst forth, and there are some of them that split open and water comes out, and there are some of them that fall down for fear of Allāh...”

Therefore, one must ensure they avoid adopting a corrupt and hard spiritual heart.

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.

“If We had sent down this Quran upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and splitting from fear of Allah. And these examples We present to the people that perhaps they will give thought.”

This verse encourages people not to become heedless towards the Holy Quran so that they fail to be rightly guided by it. The one who is unaffected by the Holy Quran possesses a spiritual heart harder than stone. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

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There are many ways to soften the spiritual heart, such as spending time remembering Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue and heart. It is important to involve one's heart by concentrating on what is being recited so that it can become softened. But even if one fails to constantly involve the heart they should never give up. As remembering Allah, the Exalted, only via the tongue is much better than not remembering Him at all. The most superior form of remembering Allah, the Exalted, is reciting the Holy Quran. In order for one to involve their heart in the recitation they should strive to understand what they are reciting by either learning Arabic or by studying the Holy Quran in a language they understand. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 23:

“Allah has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance [i.e., mention] of Allah...”

The next action which can lead to a soft spiritual heart is being kind to the poor, such as poor orphans and widows. Aiding the poor reminds one of the countless blessings Allah, the Exalted, has bestowed on them. The fact that Allah, the Exalted, has made a person self-sufficient and the helper of others can soften the heart as long as the muslim has a good intention.

Pondering about death often can cause the spiritual heart to become soft. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon

him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4258, that muslims should often remember the destroyer of pleasures meaning, death. This will cause one to take things seriously as they know they must prepare for death and the hereafter. This preparation will lead to a soft spiritual heart.

Muslims can also soften their spiritual heart by visiting graves regularly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1569, that muslims should visit graves as it will remind them of the hereafter. But it is important to note, that this deed will only cause one's spiritual heart to become soft if they ponder over their death, grave and hereafter. Merely visiting graves will make a person's mood more serious but it will not soften their spiritual heart until this self-reflection is done.

Muslims can also contemplate on the past nations who were destroyed by Allah, the Exalted, because of their persistent disobedience. As discussed extensively throughout the Holy Quran and Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the past nations were more powerful, lived longer and obtained more worldly blessings than the people of the modern world yet, as they disobeyed Allah, the Exalted, none of these things benefited them. Their massive and unparalleled empires faded away leaving only a few signs behind in order to warn those who came after them. When a muslim truly reflects on these things their spiritual heart will soften which will encourage them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

Muslims must strive to soften their hearts through the advice given. Only then will they be able to focus on the hereafter and adequately prepare for it. The person whose spiritual heart is cured of hardness becomes one whose heart is soft, pure and strong. This means that its purity recognises the difference between truth and falsehood. Its softness encourages the person to act on the truth. Its strength allows one to reject falsehood through struggle and effort. When all these combine within a person through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, they will obtain success in this world and the next. 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."

“...And these examples We present to the people that perhaps they will give thought.”

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by the examples 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.

“...And these examples We present to the people that perhaps they will give thought.”

Ignorance prevents one from being positively affected by the examples given by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, one must gain and act on 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...”

Chapter 59 – Al Hashr, Verses 22-24 of 24

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٢﴾

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ
السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ
الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَلِيقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى
يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ
﴿٢٤﴾

“He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed. He is the Most Affectionate, Most Merciful.”

He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, the Sovereign, the Holy, the Giver of Peace, the Faithful, the Overseer, the Exalted in Might, the

Compeller, the Proud. Exalted is Allah above whatever they associate with Him.

He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names. Whatever is in the heavens and earth is exalting Him. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.”

“He is Allah...”

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.

“He is Allah, other than whom there is no 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.

“He is Allah...Knower of the unseen and the witnessed...”

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 Allah...the Most Affectionate, the Most Merciful.”

The Most Affectionate means the being whose mercy encompasses all. This obviously only befits Allah, the Exalted. 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 is Allāh...the Sovereign...”

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 is Allāh...the Holy...”

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.

“He is Allāh...the Giver of Peace...”

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who bestows peace on the creation in both worlds.

A muslim should adopt this characteristic firstly through their tongue by spreading the Islamic greeting of peace to all those muslims they know or do not know. According to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2688, a person will not enter Paradise until they believe and a person will not truly believe until they love others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This love can occur when muslims spread the greetings of peace to each other. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in, Al Mujam Al Kabeer, number 10391, that As Salaam is a blessed name of Allah, the Exalted, which He has placed on Earth. Therefore, a muslim should spread this blessed name by greeting each other with peace. This spreading of peace should extend beyond the Islamic greeting and should be shown in one's speech throughout the day irrespective of who they are conversing with. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true muslim until others are not safe from their speech. Finally, a muslim should extend this spreading of peace through their actions not just words. The same Hadith quoted earlier adds that a true muslim is the one who does not cause harm to other people unjustly. And a true believer is the one who extends this peace to the possessions of other people also. In fact, Islam teaches muslims to extend this peace to all creatures such as animals. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550.

This peace should be both outward as discussed earlier and inward meaning, one should not possess any envy, malice, ill will or a similar defect towards others. This will encourage a person towards developing 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."

“He is Allāh...the Faithful...”

This divine name has several possible meanings. One is that the Faithful is the One who grants faith to people. The Faithful is also the One who protects His faithful servants in this world and in the next. In fact, all security in both worlds is only granted by Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds.

If a muslim desires this protection they should be faithful to the covenant of obedience they took with Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. In turn, He will fulfil His promise and protect them in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 40:

“...fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me]...”

One should be faithful towards all of creation by treating them kindly and fulfilling any promises made with them. One cannot be faithful to Allah, the Exalted, while cheating or mistreating the creation. As Allah, the Exalted, has commanded kind treatment of people fulfilling this duty is part of being faithful to Allah, the Exalted.

“He is Allāh...the Overseer...”

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 over 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.

“He is Allāh...the Overseer...”

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 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.

“He is Allāh...the Compeller...”

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who exerts unparalleled force in order to accomplish a task. This belongs to Allah, the Exalted, alone as there is no strength, might or force except with Allah, the Exalted.

When a muslim truly knows Allah, the Exalted, is the Compeller they will not fear anything in creation as the only will which comes into effect is the will of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, this divine name gives muslims hope as they know that no matter what difficulties they face as long as they remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, He will grant them success one way or another. No force in creation will be able to prevent this. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”

Reflecting on this divine name also prevents sins. As a muslim firmly believes no matter how safe they maybe from the justice of people no force will be able to protect them from the justice of the Compeller.

A muslim should act on this divine name by compelling themselves to obey Allah, the Exalted, at all times and overcome their evil desires fearful of the unparalleled force behind the punishment of Allah, the Exalted. No

evil thing can overcome an obedient servant of Allah, the Exalted, as they are provided strength directly from the Compeller. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 42:

“Indeed, My servants - no authority will you have over them...”

“He is Allāh...the Proud...”

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.

“...Exalted is Allāh above whatever they associate with Him.”

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 Allah above whatever they associate with Him.”

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.

“He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner...”

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 is Allah...to Him belong the best names...”

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.

“He is Allah...Whatever is in the heavens and earth is exalting Him...”

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.

“He is Allah...Whatever is in the heavens and earth is exalting Him...”

This includes those who are unwilling as their exalting Allah, the Exalted, includes the fact that they are powerless in the face of 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...”

“He is Allah...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 60 – Al Mumtahanah, Verses 1-2

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ
تَلْقَوْنَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ
يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِم
بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ
مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿١﴾

إِنْ يَتَّقِفُوكُمْ يَكُونُوا لَكُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَيَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ
وَالسِّنَنَّهُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَوَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٢﴾

“O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection while they have disbelieved in what came to you of the truth, having driven out the Prophet and yourselves

[only] because you believe in Allah, your Lord. If you have come out for striving in My cause and seeking means to My approval, [take them not as friends]. You confide to them affection but I am most knowing of what you have concealed and what you have declared. And whoever does it among you has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way.

If they gain dominance over you, they would be [i.e., behave] to you as enemies and extend against you their hands and their tongues with evil, and they wish you would disbelieve.”

“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 take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection while they have disbelieved in what came to you of the truth, having driven out the Prophet and yourselves [only] because you believe in Allāh, your Lord. If you have come out for striving in My cause and seeking means to My approval, [take them not as friends]. You confide to them affection but I am most knowing of what you have concealed and what you have declared. And whoever does it among you has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way. If they gain dominance over you, they would be [behave] to you as enemies and extend against you their hands and their tongues with evil, and they wish you would disbelieve.”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

In addition, these verses do not mean a Muslim cannot befriend a non-Muslim as these particular verses refer to the non-Muslims in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is obvious as the people mentioned forced the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to migrate. 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 verses warn 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.

Finally, as indicated by the main verses under discussion, behaving in this manner is striving in the way of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, it 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.

“...do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection while they have disbelieved in what came to you of the truth...You confide to them affection...And whoever does it among you has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way.”

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.

“...do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection while they have disbelieved in what came to you of the truth...You confide to them affection...And whoever does it among you has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way.”

Generally speaking, 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.”

“...having driven out the Prophet and yourselves [only] because you believe in Allāh, your Lord...”

As the violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against the socially weak Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, increased the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised some of them to migrate to Ethiopia. He advised them that their king was a just man and they would not face persecution there. Several Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, departed leaving behind their families, businesses and homes all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 1-2.

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.

“...If you have come out for striving in My cause and seeking means to My approval...”

Generally speaking, 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.

“...If you have come out for striving in My cause and seeking means to My approval...”

Generally speaking, 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 I am most knowing of what you have concealed...”

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.

“...but I am most knowing of what you...have declared...”

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.

“...but I am most knowing of what you have concealed and what you have declared...”

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 60 – Al Mumtahanah, Verse 3

لَنْ تَنْفَعَكُمُ أَرْحَامُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ



“Never will your relatives or your children benefit you; the Day of Resurrection He will judge between you. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing.”

“Never will your relatives or your children benefit you...”

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.

“Never will your relatives or your children benefit you...”

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.

“Never will your relatives or your children benefit you...”

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.”

“Never will your relatives or your children benefit you...”

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.

“Never will your relatives or your children benefit you...”

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.”

“Never will your relatives or your children benefit 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.

“Never will your relatives or your children benefit you; the Day of Resurrection He will judge between you...”

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.”

“...the Day of Resurrection He will judge between you...”

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.

“...the Day of Resurrection He will judge between you...”

Generally speaking, 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.

“...the Day of Resurrection He will judge between you...”

Generally speaking, one must prepare for their Final Judgement 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.

“...the Day of Resurrection He will judge between you...”

Generally speaking, 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 Allāh, of what you do, is 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 Allāh, of what you do, is 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 60 – Al Mumtahanah, Verses 4-6

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ
قَالُوا لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَءُؤُا مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى
تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحَدُّهُ إِلَّا قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ لَأَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ
وَمَا أَمْلِكُ لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ رَبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ
أُنَبِّئْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٤﴾

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٥﴾

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ
الْآخِرَ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٦﴾

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, “Indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allah. We have denied you, and there has appeared between us and you animosity and hatred forever until you believe in Allah alone” - except for the saying of Abraham to his father, “I will surely ask forgiveness for you, but I have not [power to do] for you anything against Allah. Our Lord, upon You we have relied, and to You we have returned, and to You is the destination.

Our Lord, make us not [objects of] torment for the disbelievers and forgive us, our Lord. Indeed, it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

There has certainly been for you in them an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day. And whoever turns away - then indeed, Allah is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy.”

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham...”

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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him...”

This verse indicates the importance of choosing a good 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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, “Indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allah. We have denied you...””

This is an aspect of 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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, "Indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allah. We have denied you, and there has appeared between us and you animosity and hatred forever until you believe in Allah alone"..."”

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.

The first is to love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This includes desiring what is best for others in both worldly and religious matters. This must be practically shown through one's actions meaning, supporting others financially, emotionally and physically within one's means. Counting one's favors to others not only cancels the reward but also proves their lack of love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, as this person only loves gaining praise and other forms of compensation from people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury...”

Any type of negative feelings towards others over worldly reasons, such as envy, contradicts loving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and must be avoided.

To sum up, this noble quality includes loving for others what one loves for themselves through actions not just words. This is an aspect of being a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, "Indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allah. We have denied you, and there has appeared between us and you animosity and hatred forever until you believe in Allah alone"..."”

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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, "Indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allah. We have denied you, and there has appeared between us and you animosity and hatred forever until you believe in Allah alone" ...”

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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him...except for the saying of Abraham to his father, "I will surely ask forgiveness for you, but I have not [power to do] for you anything against Allāh...””

When the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was uncertain whether he would accept faith or not he prayed for him. 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 to 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...”

But when it became clear to the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, that he would not accept faith he turned away from him out of sincerity to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 114:

“And the request of forgiveness of Abraham for his father was only because of a promise he had made to him. But when it became apparent to him [i.e., Abraham] that he [i.e., the father] was an enemy to Allāh, he disassociated himself from him. Indeed was Abraham compassionate and patient.”

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said...“Our Lord, upon You we 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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said...“Our Lord, upon You we 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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said...“Our Lord...to You we have returned...””

Turning to Allah, the Exalted, constantly is the essence of remembering Him.

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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said...“Our Lord...to You we have returned...””

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.”

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said...“Our Lord...to You is the destination.”...There has certainly been for you in them an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day...”

One must prepare for their final return by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Practically preparing for it is proof of one's hope in succeeding on Judgement Day.

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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said...“Our Lord...to You is the destination.””

One must prepare for their final return by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Practically preparing for it is proof of one's hope in succeeding on Judgement Day. 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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said...“Our Lord...make us not [objects of] torment for the disbelievers...””

One way this can occur is when Muslims fail to fulfil their duty as the ambassadors of Islam. By failing in this duty they indirectly put non-Muslims off from accepting Islam. This therefore becomes a great trial for them.

It is therefore 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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said...“Our Lord...make us not [objects of] torment for the disbelievers...””

These verses remind Muslims of an important point. That each person can become a test for others and others are a test for them. For example, the poor are a test for the rich meaning; will the rich remain grateful to Allah, the Exalted, by using their wealth in the correct way as prescribed by Islam? And the rich are a test for the poor meaning; will the poor remain patient during their poverty or become impatient when they observe the rich enjoying the pleasures of the world? Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 20:

“...And We have made some of you [people] as trial for others - will you have patience?...”

A Muslim should avoid observing others from a worldly point of view meaning, they should not observe those who possess more worldly things than them and instead observe those who possess less than them so that they remain grateful over whatever they possess. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513. A Muslim in this respect should busy themselves with their religious and worldly duties which if done correctly will preoccupy them from observing those who possess more worldly things than them.

In addition, it is important to understand that no matter what situation a person is in it is best for them even if they fail to observe how as Allah, the Exalted, grants them the best thing for them instead of granting them their desires as the latter would 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.”

All a Muslim needs to do is obey Allah, the Exalted, in every situation and this will ensure they pass each test and difficulty for example, showing patience in times of difficulty and gratitude in times of ease, which involves using each blessing in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. When a Muslim trusts Allah, the Exalted, has granted them what is best for them they will undoubtedly overcome every test especially, when they observe others who seem to be in a better situation than them.

In addition this supplication reminds Muslims not to become a test and trial for others by mistreating them nor should they fail their test when others mistreat them. Instead they should treat everyone according to the teachings of Islam without any resentment or negative feelings towards them. Every breath, step, and situation is a test a Muslim must overcome by adhering to the teachings of Islam.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said...“Our Lord...make us not [objects of] torment for the disbelievers...””

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 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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said...“Our Lord...make us not [objects of] torment for the disbelievers...””

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]...”

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said...“...forgive us, our Lord...””

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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said...“Our Lord...Indeed, it is You who 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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said...“Our Lord...Indeed, it is You who 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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him...for anyone whose hope is in Allāh...”

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.”

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him...for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day...”

True hope in Judgement Day involves practically preparing for it.

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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him...for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day...”

True hope in Judgement Day involves practically preparing for it.

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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him...for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day...”

True hope in Judgement Day involves practically preparing for it.

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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him...for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day...”

True hope in Judgement Day involves practically preparing for it.

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.”

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him...for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day...”

True hope in Judgement Day involves practically preparing for it.

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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him...for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day. And whoever turns away - then indeed, Allāh is the Free of need...”

True hope in Allah, the Exalted, involves sincerely obeying Him and true hope in Judgement Day involves practically preparing for it.

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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him...for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day. And whoever turns away - then indeed, Allāh is the Free of need...”

True hope in Allah, the Exalted, involves sincerely obeying Him and true hope in Judgement Day involves practically preparing for it.

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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him...for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day. And whoever turns away - then indeed, Allāh is the Free of need...”

True hope in Allah, the Exalted, involves sincerely obeying Him and true hope in Judgement Day involves practically preparing for it.

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.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him...for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day. And whoever turns away - then indeed, Allāh is the Free of need...”

True hope in Allah, the Exalted, involves sincerely obeying Him and true hope in Judgement Day involves practically preparing for it.

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.

“...indeed, Allāh is the Free of need...”

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

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

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

“...indeed, Allāh 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.”

Chapter 60 – Al Mumtahanah, Verse 7

عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَن يَجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ عَادَيْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَوَدَّةً
وَاللَّهُ قَدِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾

“Perhaps Allah will put, between you and those to whom you have been enemies among them, affection. And Allah is competent, and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

“Perhaps Allah will put, between you and those to whom you have been enemies among them, affection...”

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.

The first is to love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This includes desiring what is best for others in both worldly and religious matters. This must be practically shown through one's actions meaning, supporting others financially, emotionally and physically within one's means. Counting one's favors to others not only cancels the reward but also proves their lack of love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, as this person only loves gaining praise and other forms of compensation from people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury...”

Any type of negative feelings towards others over worldly reasons, such as envy, contradicts loving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and must be avoided.

To sum up, this noble quality includes loving for others what one loves for themselves through actions not just words. This is an aspect of being a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion 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.

“Perhaps Allah will put, between you and those to whom you have been enemies among them, affection...”

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 themself. 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.

“Perhaps Allah will put, between you and those to whom you have been enemies among them, affection...”

One must adopt the correct attitude if they desire this to occur just like the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did. 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.”

For example, 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, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, carrying the keys to the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, after taking it from the non-Muslim who was previously in charge of the keys, Uthman Bin Talha. Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, requested to keep the keys with himself so that he could become the custodian of the Kaaba. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings be upon him, summoned Uthman Bin Talha, and returned the keys to him and told him that this day was a day of piety and good faith. Uthman Bin Talha, may Allah be pleased with him, then accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 408.

“...And Allāh 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.

“...and 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 60 – Al Mumtahanah, Verses 8-9

لَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٨﴾

إِنَّمَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَن تَوَلَّوهُمْ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُوْلَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٩﴾

“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.

Allah only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion - [forbids] that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”

“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, Allāh loves those who act justly. Allah only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion - [forbids] that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”

These are the verses which are the foundation of how one should deal with non-muslims. All other verses must be seen in light of these verses as this was the attitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This is obvious when one studies their lives.

The word ally indicates a strong bond which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

In addition, the other verses in the Holy Quran which have a tone of harshness against non-muslims do not mean a Muslim cannot befriend a non-Muslim as those verses refer 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.

In reality, those verses warn 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.

“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, Allāh loves those who act justly. Allah only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion - [forbids] that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”

These are the verses which are the foundation of how one should deal with non-muslims. All other verses must be seen in light of these verses as this was the attitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This is obvious when one studies their lives.

The word ally indicates a strong bond which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

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 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.

“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, Allāh loves those who act justly. Allah only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion - [forbids] that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”

These are the verses which are the foundation of how one should deal with non-muslims. All other verses must be seen in light of these verses as this was the attitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This is obvious when one studies their lives.

The word ally indicates a strong bond which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

Generally speaking, 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 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. Allah only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion - [forbids] that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”

These are the verses which are the foundation of how one should deal with non-muslims. All other verses must be seen in light of these verses as this was the attitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This is obvious when one studies their lives.

The word ally indicates a strong bond which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

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.

“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, Allāh loves those who act justly. Allah only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion - [forbids] that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”

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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.¹ 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.

“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, Allāh loves those who act justly. Allah only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion - [forbids] that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”

These are the verses which are the foundation of how one should deal with non-muslims. All other verses must be seen in light of these verses as this was the attitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This is obvious when one studies their lives.

The word ally indicates a strong bond which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

There are many examples of treating friends and foes with justice from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

For example, 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 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. Allah only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion - [forbids] that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”

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The word ally indicates a strong bond which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

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.

“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, Allāh loves those who act justly. Allah only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion - [forbids] that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”

These are the verses which are the foundation of how one should deal with non-muslims. All other verses must be seen in light of these verses as this was the attitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This is obvious when one studies their lives.

The word ally indicates a strong bond which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

For example, 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.

“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, Allāh loves those who act justly. Allah only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion - [forbids] that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”

These are the verses which are the foundation of how one should deal with non-muslims. All other verses must be seen in light of these verses as this was the attitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This is obvious when one studies their lives.

The word ally indicates a strong bond which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

As the violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against the socially weak Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, increased the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised some of them to migrate to Ethiopia. He advised them that their king was a just man and they would not face persecution there. Several Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, departed leaving behind their families, businesses and homes all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 1-2.

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.

Chapter 60 – Al Mumtahanah, Verses 10-11

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا جَاءَكُمْ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مُهَاجِرَاتٍ
فَأَمْتَحِنُوهُنَّ ۗ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ ۗ فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ فَلَا
تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ لَا هُنَّ حِلٌّ لَهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحِلُّونَ لَهُنَّ
وَأَتُوهُنَّ مِمَّا أَنْفَقُوا وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ إِذَا
ءَانَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجْرَهُنَّ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوا بِعِصَمِ الْكَوَافِرِ وَسْئَلُوا مِمَّا
أَنْفَقْتُمْ وَلَيْسَ لَكُمْ أَنْفَقُوا ذَلِكُمْ حُكْمُ اللَّهِ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

وَإِنْ فَاتَكُمْ شَيْءٌ مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ فَعَاقِبْتُمْ فَاتُوا
الَّذِينَ ذَهَبَتْ أَزْوَاجُهُمْ مِّثْلَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي
أَنْتُمْ بِهِءَ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١﴾

“O you who have believed, when the believing women come to you as emigrants, examine [i.e., test] them. Allah is most knowing as to their faith. And if you know them to be believers, then do not return them to the disbelievers; they are not lawful [wives] for them, nor are they lawful

[husbands] for them. But give them [i.e., the disbelievers] what they have spent [dowry]. And there is no blame upon you if you marry them when you have given them their due compensation [dowry]. And hold not to marriage bonds with disbelieving women, but ask for what you have spent [dowry] and let them [i.e., the disbelievers] ask for what they have spent [dowry].

That is the judgement of Allah; He judges between you. And Allah is Knowing and Wise.

And if you have lost any of your wives to the disbelievers and you subsequently obtain [something], then give those [disbelievers] whose wives have gone the equivalent of what they had spent. And fear Allah, in whom you are believers.”

“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, when the believing women come to you as emigrants, examine [i.e., test] them. Allāh is most knowing as to their faith...”

Some women would migrate in order to annoy their husbands or for other worldly reasons and not for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

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, when the believing women come to you as emigrants, examine [i.e., test] them. Allāh is most knowing as to their faith...”

Some women would migrate in order to annoy their husbands or for other worldly reasons and not for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

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.

“O you who have believed, when the believing women come to you as emigrants, examine [i.e., test] them. Allāh is most knowing as to their faith And if you know them to be believers, then do not return them to the disbelievers; they are not lawful [wives] for them, nor are they lawful [husbands] for them. But give them [i.e., the disbelievers] what they have spent [dowry]. And there is no blame upon you if you marry them when you have given them their due compensation [dowry]. And hold not to marriage bonds with disbelieving women, but ask for what you have spent [dowry] and let them [i.e., the disbelievers] ask for what they have spent [dowry]. That is the judgement of Allāh; He judges between you...And if you have lost any of your wives to the disbelievers and you subsequently obtain [something], then give those [disbelievers] whose wives have gone the equivalent of what they had spent...”

Even during a time of great enmity and violence against the muslims Allah, the Exalted, commanded them to uphold justice with the non-muslims of Mecca.

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.

“O you who have believed, when the believing women come to you as emigrants, examine [i.e., test] them. Allāh is most knowing as to their faith And if you know them to be believers, then do not return them to the disbelievers; they are not lawful [wives] for them, nor are they lawful [husbands] for them. But give them [i.e., the disbelievers] what they have spent [dowry]. And there is no blame upon you if you marry them when you have given them their due compensation [dowry]. And hold not to marriage bonds with disbelieving women, but ask for what you have spent [dowry] and let them [i.e., the disbelievers] ask for what they have spent [dowry]. That is the judgement of Allāh; He judges between you...And if you have lost any of your wives to the disbelievers and you subsequently obtain [something], then give those [disbelievers] whose wives have gone the equivalent of what they had spent...”

Even during a time of great enmity and violence against the muslims Allah, the Exalted, commanded them to uphold justice with the non-muslims of Mecca.

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.¹ 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.

“O you who have believed, when the believing women come to you as emigrants, examine [i.e., test] them. Allāh is most knowing as to their faith And if you know them to be believers, then do not return them to the disbelievers; they are not lawful [wives] for them, nor are they lawful [husbands] for them. But give them [i.e., the disbelievers] what they have spent [dowry]. And there is no blame upon you if you marry them when you have given them their due compensation [dowry]. And hold not to marriage bonds with disbelieving women, but ask for what you have spent [dowry] and let them [i.e., the disbelievers] ask for what they have spent [dowry]. That is the judgement of Allāh; He judges between you...And if you have lost any of your wives to the disbelievers and you subsequently obtain [something], then give those [disbelievers] whose wives have gone the equivalent of what they had spent...”

It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, showed greater care and love towards women as He forbade the believing women from being sent back to Mecca after they migrated to Medina. Whereas, He allowed the men who accepted Islam and migrated to Medina to be sent back to Mecca, which was agreed to in the Pact of Hudaibiya.

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 if any man who accepted Islam from Mecca fled to Medina they would be returned to Mecca. But if someone fled from Medina to Mecca they would not be sent back to Medina. When the pact was signed a Companion, Abu Jandal, may Allah be pleased with him, who had been imprisoned in Mecca managed to escape and reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But as the pact was agreed Abu Jandal, may Allah be pleased with him, had to be returned to Mecca and could not go to Medina with the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Witnessing this greatly distressed the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded Abu Jandal, may Allah be pleased with him, to be patient and control himself. He promised that Allah, the Exalted, would provide relief and succor for him and the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, stuck in Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 229-230.

“...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.

“...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.

“...And fear Allāh, in whom you are believers.”

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, in whom you are believers.”

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.

“...And fear Allāh, in whom you are believers.”

Fearing Allah, the Exalted, involves inward belief which is supported by outward 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.

Chapter 60 – Al Mumtahanah, Verse 12

يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعُنكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَا
يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ
أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ
وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعَصِينَكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعْهُنَّ
وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

“O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not associate anything with Allah, nor will they steal, nor will they commit unlawful sexual intercourse, nor will they kill their children, nor will they bring forth a slander they have invented between their arms and legs, nor will they disobey you in what is right - then accept their pledge and ask forgiveness for them of Allah. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

“O Prophet, when the believing women come to you...”

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 Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not associate anything with Allāh...then accept their pledge...”

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.

“O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not...steal...then accept their pledge...”

This contradicts the character of a true muslim and believer.

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 Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not...steal...then accept their pledge...”

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 Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not...commit unlawful sexual intercourse...then accept their pledge...”

The true servants of Allah, the Exalted, avoid all forms of illegal relationships. The fact that adultery has been placed next to polytheism and killing an innocent person in this verse indicates its severity.

Muslims should take precautions in order to avoid being tempted into illegal relationships. Firstly, they should learn to lower their gaze. This does not mean one should always stare at their shoes but it means they should avoid looking around unnecessary especially in public places. They should avoid staring at others and maintain respect for the opposite gender. Just like a muslim would not like someone staring at their sister or daughter they should not stare at other people's sisters and daughters. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 30:

“Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision¹ and guard their private parts. That is purer for them...”

Whenever possible a muslim should avoid spending time alone with the opposite gender unless they are related in a way which prohibits marriage. This has been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1862.

Muslims should dress and behave with modesty. Dressing modestly avoids attracting the glances of strangers and behaving modestly prevents one from taking the initial steps which could lead to an illegal relationship such as talking unnecessarily to the opposite gender.

Understanding the blessings of avoiding illegal relationships is another way to protect oneself from them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed Paradise to the one who safeguards their tongue and chastity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2408.

Fearing the punishment of being involved in illegal relationships will also aid a muslim to avoid them. For example, faith will depart from the person who is committing fornication. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4690.

In reality, a muslim does not need illegal relationships as Islam prescribes marriage. Those who cannot afford to marry should fast often as this also helps to control one's desires and actions. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3398.

“O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not...commit unlawful sexual intercourse...then accept their pledge...”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6474, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, guaranteed Paradise to the person who safeguards their mouth and chastity.

The first thing mentioned indicates safeguarding one's speech. Meaning, a muslim must avoid all types of evil speech such as backbiting as it only takes a single evil word to cause someone to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

In addition, a muslim should avoid all vain and useless speech as this only wastes one's precious time which will be a great regret for them on Judgment Day. In addition, vain speech is often the first step before sinful speech therefore, it is best to avoid it. One should either speak good or remain silent. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176.

The main Hadith under discussion also advises to safeguard oneself from consuming the unlawful. This will lead to all of one's righteous deeds being rejected irrespective of their intention. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

The second aspect of the main Hadith under discussion advises muslims to safeguard their chastity meaning, avoid unlawful relationships. A muslim has been given a way to achieving this namely, marriage. If a muslim is not in the right position to get married, such as financially, then they should fast often as this reduces carnal desires. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1905.

Finally, as these two aspects combined lead to Paradise it is therefore the reason why getting married has been labeled completing half of one's faith in a Hadith found in Al Mu'jam Al Awsat, number 992.

“O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not...commit unlawful sexual intercourse...then accept their pledge...”

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 is invited towards fornication but rejects it out of the fear of Allah, the Exalted. Controlling one's desire especially when no one except Allah, the Exalted, will know about it is a great deed. Muslims should strive to avoid situations where they might be invited to sins by firstly avoiding places where sins are more common, such as a nightclub. This is extremely important as a person's environment often has a deep impact on their attitude and behaviour. Just like a student is more likely to study in a quiet library compared to a busy and loud house a muslim is less likely to be attracted to sins when they avoid places where sins occur regularly and openly. The other important thing is to avoid people who openly commit sins and invite others to them. A person will adopt the characteristics of their companions whether good or bad. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. Muslims should not only ensure they accompany good people but also encourage their

dependents, such as their children, to do the same. If muslims truly concentrated on this it will dramatically reduce the amount of youth who become involved in gangs and crime. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

“O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not...commit unlawful sexual intercourse, nor will they kill their children...then accept their pledge...”

This could occur when a child was born out of wedlock or out of fear of poverty or because of giving birth to a girl. 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.”

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.

“O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not...commit unlawful sexual intercourse, nor will they kill their children...then accept their pledge...”

This could occur out of fear of poverty.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, allocated all things, such as provision, to all creatures over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth.

It is important to understand that there are two aspects in respect to all situations, such as gaining one's provision. The first aspect is what Allah, the Exalted, has decided meaning, destiny; this will occur and nothing in creation can prevent this from occurring. As this is out of a person's hands it makes no sense to stress over this aspect as they have no influence on destiny irrespective of what they or anybody else does.

The second aspect is one's own efforts. This aspect a person has full control over and they should therefore concentrate on this aspect by using the means they have been provided such as their physical strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, which they have no control over, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to gain lawful provision in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their

dependents while avoiding the unlawful, excess, waste and extravagance.

To conclude, a muslim should never waste time stressing over things they have no control or influence over instead they should use the means they possess and act on those things which they have control over according to the teachings of Islam. This is what Allah, the Exalted, has commanded.

“O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not...kill their children...then accept their pledge...”

Generally speaking, the true servants of Allah, the Exalted, respect all forms of life. They obey the teachings of Islam which clearly prescribes that mercy should be shown to all of creation. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6028, that whoever does not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. Islam not only advises the kind treatment of people but also prescribes it for animals. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550. No other religion places such value on human life. The Holy Quran compares the killing of one innocent person to the killing of the whole of mankind. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 32:

“...kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved mankind entirely...”

This verse alone is enough to deter those people who claim to be killing innocent people in the name of Islam. This verse proves that their real evil intention is to gain wealth and power which has nothing to do with Islam.

Not harming others is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in

Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true muslim until other people irrespective of their faith are safe from their tongue and actions. If this is the case for only harming others how can Islam permit the killing of innocent people? In fact, this is answered in this same Hadith. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warns that a person cannot be a true believer until the lives and belongings of others are not safe from their actions.

Those who claim to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, should know that he never harmed another person unless it was in self-defence against a male soldier. He never harmed a woman, the elderly or a child. In fact, he never took revenge for himself and only applied the punishment ordained by Allah, the Exalted, as the head of state to those who crossed the limits. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6050. This is how muslims must behave under all circumstances if they claim to be the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

A muslim has been given permission to defend themselves, their families and belongings. But all of this has limits. In no way does a muslim have permission to strike first and take the life of an innocent person. Muslims should therefore treat others how they wish to be treated meaning, with respect and mercy.

“O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not...commit unlawful sexual intercourse...nor will they bring forth a slander they have invented between their arms and legs...then accept their pledge...”

This involves falsely attributing a child to someone other than the child's biological father. This does not include connecting an adopted child to a parent out of love and affection.

Generally speaking, 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.

“O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not...commit unlawful sexual intercourse...nor will they bring forth a slander they have invented between their arms and legs...then accept their pledge...”

This involves falsely attributing a child to someone other than the child's biological father. This does not include connecting an adopted child to a parent out of love and affection.

Generally speaking, 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.

“O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not...disobey you in what is right then accept their pledge...”

Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would command nothing but good yet the structure of the verse indicates that it is a lesson for all people towards their leaders till the end of time.

This is an aspect of being sincere to 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.

“O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not...disobey you in what is right then accept their pledge...”

Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would command nothing but good yet the structure of the verse indicates that it is a lesson for all people towards their leaders till the end of time.

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 leaders of society. 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.

“O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging...then accept their pledge and ask forgiveness for them of Allāh...”

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 himself 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...”

“...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.

Chapter 60 – Al Mumtahanah, Verse 13 of 13

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا نَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ قَدْ
يَسُؤُوا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ كَمَا يَبْسُ الْكُفَّارُ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْقُبُورِ ﴿١٣﴾

“O you who have believed, do not make allies of a people with whom Allah has become angry. They have despaired of [reward in] the Hereafter just as the disbelievers have despaired of [meeting] the companions [i.e., inhabitants] of the graves.”

“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 make allies of a people with whom Allah has become angry. They have despaired of [reward in] the Hereafter...”

The word ally indicates a strong bond which influences a person’s attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

This verse could be referring to the people of the book living in Medina as they did claim to believe in the hereafter. They earned the anger of Allah, the Exalted, as they clearly recognised the truthfulness of Islam yet still rejected it for the sake of worldly gain.

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.

“O you who have believed, do not make allies of a people with whom Allah has become angry. They have despaired of [reward in] the Hereafter...”

The word ally indicates a strong bond which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

This verse could be referring to the people of the book living in Medina as they did claim to believe in the hereafter. They earned the anger of Allah, the Exalted, as they clearly recognised the truthfulness of Islam yet still rejected it for the sake of worldly gain.

In addition, this verse does not mean a Muslim cannot befriend a non-Muslim as these particular verses refer 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.

Finally, this verse also 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.”

“O you who have believed, do not make allies of a people with whom Allah has become angry. They have despaired of [reward in] the Hereafter...”

The word ally indicates a strong bond which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to 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.

“...just as the disbelievers have despaired of [meeting] the companions [i.e., inhabitants] of the graves.”

Every day people lose their loved ones. It is an inevitable outcome. A muslim can remember and act on many things which can aid them during this difficulty. One thing is to observe the situation in a positive way. Meaning, instead of being sad over what one has lost they should concentrate on the good things that they gained through the person who has departed, such as their good advice and guidance. When one reflects on this they will understand that it was better to know the person before losing them instead of not knowing them at all. It is similar to the statement, it is better to have loved and lost than not loved at all. Though in most cases, this statement is taken out of context and misused but when used in this way it is correct and helpful.

In addition, a muslim who undoubtedly believes in the hereafter should always remember that people do not meet in this world only to leave each other. But instead they only leave this world in order to meet again in the next world. This attitude can aid one in remaining patient during such a difficulty. And it should inspire them to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience so that they can reunite with their loved one in their final resting place in the gardens of refuge, forever.

“...just as the disbelievers have despaired of [meeting] the companions [i.e., inhabitants] of the graves.”

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.

“...just as the disbelievers have despaired of [meeting] the companions [i.e., inhabitants] of the graves.”

This verse can also be interpreted to mean that the disbelievers in their graves have lost all hope of good.

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?”

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 61 – As Saf, Verse 1

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ

“Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth exalts Allah, and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.”

***“Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth exalts
Allah...”***

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.

“Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth exalts Allah...”

This includes those who are unwilling as their exalting Allah, the Exalted, includes the fact that they are powerless in the face of 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 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.

Chapter 61 – As Saf, Verses 2-3

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا لِمَ تَقُوْلُوْنَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾

كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ اَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾

“O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do?”

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

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

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.””

***“O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do?
Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not
do.”***

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

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.

***“O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do?
Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not
do.”***

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.

***“O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do?
Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not
do.”***

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?

***“O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do?
Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not
do.”***

This contradicts truthfulness as this involves aligning one's intention, speech and actions.

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.

***“O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do?
Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not
do.”***

This contradicts truthfulness as this involves aligning one's inward belief, speech and 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.

***“O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do?
Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not
do.”***

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.

***“O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do?
Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not
do.”***

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.

Chapter 61 – As Saf, Verse 4

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا
كَأَنَّهُمْ بِنِينَ مَرَصُوصٌ



“Indeed, Allah loves those who fight in His cause in a row as though they are a [single] structure joined firmly.”

“Indeed, Allah loves those who fight in His cause...”

The root of this is 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.

“Indeed, Allah loves those who fight in His cause...”

This involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

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.

“Indeed, Allah loves those who fight in His cause...”

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 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.

“Indeed, Allah loves those who fight in His cause...”

This involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

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.”

“Indeed, Allāh loves those who fight in His cause in a row as though they are a [single] structure joined firmly.”

This verse indicates the importance of unity.

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.

“Indeed, Allāh loves those who fight in His cause in a row as though they are a [single] structure joined firmly.”

This verse indicates the importance of unity.

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.

Chapter 61 – As Saf, Verse 5

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ ۖ يَاقَوْمِ لِمَ تَوذُّونَنِي وَقَدْ
تَعْلَمُونَ أَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ
اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٥﴾

“And when Moses said to his people, “O my people, why do you harm me while you certainly know that I am the messenger of Allah to you?” And when they deviated, Allah caused their hearts to deviate. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.”

“And when Moses said to his people, "O my people, why do you harm me while you certainly know that I am the messenger of Allah to you?"..."”

This indicates their lack of sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. Muslims must avoid behaving in this manner towards 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 when Moses said to his people, "O my people, why do you harm me while you certainly know that I am the messenger of Allah to you?"..."”

These words were a lesson for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he was not the only Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, to be harassed by people. As always, he actualised the lessons Allah, the Exalted, taught him.

For example, in the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. After this expedition the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Mecca. While distributing the spoils of war an ignorant person commented that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not seeking to serve Allah, the Exalted, in this distribution. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of this he became angry and then supplicated for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, on the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, and then commented that he suffered more distress from his people but still remained patient. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 492.

One of the ways of achieving patience during difficulties is by always comparing one's difficulty to harder and more severe difficulties. When one does this it will make their problem seem small and less significant. This change in focus can aid a Muslim to be patient and remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted. This can be explained through a worldly example. A person suffering from a severe migraine can be effected in such a way that it seems to them that the world is collapsing around them. But if this same person was on a ship which is about to hit an iceberg and sink in the middle of a freezing ocean then their severe migraine will not seem like a big deal. In fact, they would probably not even be effected by it at all as their whole focus would become shifted to the imminent life threatening danger namely, the sinking ship. This is how a Muslim should behave during difficulties. When they encounter a difficulty they should realise it could have been much worse and try to shift they focus on greater difficulties they could have encountered. This can be achieved by observing others who are in more difficult situations than them. For example, a person who suffers from back pain can ponder over the person who is physically disabled. Or they could ponder over much greater difficulties such as death and Judgment Day. This comparison will reduce the significance of their difficulty and its effects, which in turn will aid them in remaining patient and steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience.

“And when Moses said to his people, "O my people, why do you harm me while you certainly know that I am the messenger of Allāh to you?" And when they deviated, Allāh caused their hearts to deviate. And Allāh does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.”

This indicates their lack of sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. Muslims must avoid behaving in this manner towards 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.

“And when Moses said to his people, "O my people, why do you harm me while you certainly know that I am the messenger of Allāh to you?" And when they deviated, Allāh caused their hearts to deviate. And Allāh does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.”

This indicates their lack of sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. Muslims must avoid behaving in this manner towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon 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 when they deviated, Allah caused their hearts to deviate...”

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 Allāh does not guide 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.

Chapter 61 – As Saf, Verses 6-7

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَبْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ
مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّورَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي
أَسْمُهُ أَهْمَدٌ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٦﴾

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُوَ يُدْعَى إِلَى
الْإِسْلَامِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٧﴾

"And [mention] when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, "O Children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad [another name of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]." But when he came to them with clear evidences, they said, "This is obvious magic."

And who is more unjust than one who invents about Allah untruth while he is being invited to Islam. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people."

“And [mention] when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, “O Children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you...””

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] when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, “O Children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah 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 [another name of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him].” But when he came to them with clear evidences, they said, “This is obvious magic.” And who is more unjust than one who invents about Allah untruth while he is being invited to Islam...”

The Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, confirmed the correct teachings of the Torah and corrected the things which had been intentionally altered by the scholars of 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.

“...But when he [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] came to them with clear evidences, they said, "This is obvious magic.””

The clearest proof the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brought was the Holy Quran. One should not behave dismissively towards it, like the people of the book living in Medina did, by failing to 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.

“...But when he [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] came to them with clear evidences, they said, "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 who is more unjust than one who invents about Allāh untruth...”

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 who is more unjust than one who invents about Allāh untruth while he is being invited to Islām...”

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 who is more unjust than one who invents about Allāh untruth while he is being invited to Islām...”

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 who is more unjust than one who invents about Allah untruth while he is being invited to Islam...”

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 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.

“...And 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 61 – As Saf, Verses 8-9

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ
الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨﴾

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ
كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٩﴾

“They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it.

It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although those who associate others with Allah dislike it.”

“They want to extinguish the light of Allāh with their mouths, but Allāh will perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it.”

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.

“They want to extinguish the light of Allāh with their mouths, but Allāh will perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it. It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although they who associate others with Allāh dislike it.”

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, witnessed how sincerely obeying and following this divine light meaning, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led to superiority and success. Muslims must follow in their footsteps if they desire to benefit from this light and achieve the same superiority. This has been indicated in the main verses under discussion.

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.

“They want to extinguish the light of Allāh with their mouths, but Allāh will perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it. It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although they who associate others with Allāh dislike it.”

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, witnessed how sincerely obeying and following this divine light meaning, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led to superiority and success. Muslims must follow in their footsteps if they desire to benefit from this light and achieve the same superiority. This has been indicated in the main verses under discussion.

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.

“They want to extinguish the light of Allāh with their mouths, but Allāh will perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it. It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although they who associate others with Allāh dislike it.”

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, witnessed how sincerely obeying and following this divine light meaning, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led to superiority and success. Muslims must follow in their footsteps if they desire to benefit from this light and achieve the same superiority. This has been indicated in the main verses under discussion.

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.

“They want to extinguish the light of Allāh with their mouths, but Allāh will perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it. It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although they who associate others with Allāh dislike it.”

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, witnessed how sincerely obeying and following this divine light meaning, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led to superiority and success. Muslims must follow in their footsteps if they desire to benefit from this light and achieve the same superiority. This has been indicated in the main verses under discussion.

Muslims must therefore 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.

Chapter 61 – As Saf, Verses 10-13

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَحْرَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ
١٠

تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۖ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ
ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ١١

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
وَمَسْكِنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ١٢

وَأُخْرَىٰ يُحِبُّونَهَا ۖ نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ ۗ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
١٣

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment?”

[It is that] you believe in Allah and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew.

He will forgive for you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow and pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence. That is the great attainment.

And [you will obtain] another [favor] that you love - victory from Allah and an imminent conquest; and give good tidings to the believers.”

“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, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger...That is best for you, if you only knew.”

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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you...strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew.”

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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you...strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew.”

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.”

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you...strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew.”

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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you...strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew.”

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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you...strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew.”

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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you...strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew.”

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]...”

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you...strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew.”

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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you...strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew.”

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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew.”

As indicated by end of these verses, ignorance can prevent one from being positively influenced by the truth mentioned in these verses.

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, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew.”

As indicated by end of these verses, ignorance can prevent one from being positively influenced by the truth mentioned in these verses. Therefore, one must adopt certainty of faith by 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...”

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew. He will forgive for 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.”

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew. He will forgive for you your sins. He will forgive for you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow and pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence...”

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, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew. He will forgive for you your sins. He will forgive for you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow and pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence. That is the great 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.””

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew. He will forgive for you your sins. He will forgive for you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow and pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence. That 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.”

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew. He will forgive for you your sins. He will forgive for you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow and pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence. That 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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew. He will forgive for you your sins. He will forgive for you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow...And [you will obtain] another [favor] that you love - victory from Allāh and an imminent conquest; and give good tidings to the believers.”

This could be referring to 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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew. He will forgive for you your sins. He will forgive for you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow...And [you will obtain] another [favor] that you love - victory from Allāh and an imminent conquest; and give good tidings to the believers.”

Generally speaking, the last part of these verses indicates that when one adopts true belief meaning, they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will obtain peace and success in this world also, even if this success is not obvious to 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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew. He will forgive for you your sins. He will forgive for you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow...And [you will obtain] another [favor] that you love - victory from Allāh and an imminent conquest; and give good tidings to the believers.”

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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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew. He will forgive for you your sins. He will forgive for you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow...And [you will obtain] another [favor] that you love - victory from Allāh and an imminent conquest; and give good tidings to the believers.”

Generally speaking, the last part of these verses indicates that when one adopts true belief meaning, they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will obtain peace and success in this world also, even if this success is not obvious to 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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew. He will forgive for you your sins. He will forgive for you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow...And [you will obtain] another [favor] that you love - victory from Allāh and an imminent conquest; and give good tidings to the believers.”

Generally speaking, the last part of these verses indicates that when one adopts true belief meaning, they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will obtain peace and success in this world also, even if this success is not obvious to 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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew. He will forgive for you your sins. He will forgive for you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow...And [you will obtain] another [favor] that you love - victory from Allāh and an imminent conquest; and give good tidings to the believers.”

Generally speaking, the last part of these verses indicates that when one adopts true belief meaning, they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will obtain peace and success in this world also, even if this success is not obvious to 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 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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew. He will forgive for you your sins. He will forgive for you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow...And [you will obtain] another [favor] that you love - victory from Allāh and an imminent conquest; and give good tidings to the believers.”

Generally speaking, the last part of these verses indicates that when one adopts true belief meaning, they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will obtain peace and success in this world also, even if this success is not obvious to them.

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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew. He will forgive for you your sins. He will forgive for you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow...And [you will obtain] another [favor] that you love - victory from Allāh and an imminent conquest; and give good tidings to the believers.”

Generally speaking, the last part of these verses indicates that when one adopts true belief meaning, they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will obtain peace and success in this world also, even if this success is not obvious to them.

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.

“O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allāh and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you only knew. He will forgive for you your sins. He will forgive for you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow...And [you will obtain] another [favor] that you love - victory from Allāh and an imminent conquest; and give good tidings to the believers.”

Generally speaking, the last part of these verses indicates that when one adopts true belief meaning, they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will obtain peace and success in this world also, even if this success is not obvious to them.

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.

Chapter 61 – As Saf, Verse 14 of 14

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا أَنْصَارَ اللَّهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
لِلْحَوَارِيِّينَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ
فَتَأْمَنَّا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَكَفَرَتْ طَائِفَةٌ فَأَيَّدْنَا الَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا عَلَىٰ عَدُوِّهِمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا ظَاهِرِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

“O you who have believed, be supporters of Allah, as when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, “Who are my supporters for Allah?” The disciples said, “We are supporters of Allah.” And a faction of the Children of Israel believed and a faction disbelieved. So We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became dominant.”

“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, be supporters of [the religion of] Allah, as when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, “Who are my supporters for Allah?” The disciples said, “We are supporters of Allah.”...”

This is an aspect of being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, just like the true followers of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, were sincere to him and 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, 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.

“O you who have believed, be supporters of [the religion of] Allah, as when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, “Who are my supporters for Allah?” The disciples said, “We are supporters of Allah.”...”

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.

“O you who have believed, be supporters of [the religion of] Allah, as when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, “Who are my supporters for Allah?” The disciples said, “We are supporters of Allah.”...”

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?

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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, be supporters of [the religion of] Allah, as when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, “Who are my supporters for Allah?” The disciples said, “We are supporters of Allah.”...”

This is an aspect of being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, just like the true followers of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, were sincere to him and Allah, the Exalted.

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.”

“...when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, “Who are my supporters for Allāh?” The disciples said, “We are supporters of Allāh.” And a faction of the Children of Israel believed and a faction disbelieved. So We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became dominant.”

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.

“...when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, “Who are my supporters for Allāh?” The disciples said, “We are supporters of Allāh.” And a faction of the Children of Israel believed and a faction disbelieved. So We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became dominant.”

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.

“...when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, “Who are my supporters for Allāh?” The disciples said, “We are supporters of Allāh.” And a faction of the Children of Israel believed and a faction disbelieved. So We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became dominant.”

This promise has been extended to all those who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] 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 previous quoted 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.

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.

“...when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, “Who are my supporters for Allāh?” The disciples said, “We are supporters of Allāh.” And a faction of the Children of Israel believed and a faction disbelieved. So We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became dominant.”

This promise has been extended to all those who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] 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.

“...when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, "Who are my supporters for Allāh?" The disciples said, "We are supporters of Allāh." And a faction of the Children of Israel believed and a faction disbelieved. So We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became dominant.”

This promise has been extended to all those who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] 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.

“...when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, “Who are my supporters for Allāh?” The disciples said, “We are supporters of Allāh.” And a faction of the Children of Israel believed and a faction disbelieved. So We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became dominant.”

This promise has been extended to all those who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”

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.

“...when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, "Who are my supporters for Allāh?" The disciples said, "We are supporters of Allāh." And a faction of the Children of Israel believed and a faction disbelieved. So We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became dominant.”

Even though history has shown that the true followers of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, did not gain outward victory against their enemies, the final part of this verse could be alluding to the end of time when the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, will return and he and his true followers, the muslims, will be granted victory by Allah, the Exalted. His return has been indicated in many verses of the Holy Quran and explicitly stated in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4077. One of his missions will be to kill the Anti-Christ. 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. 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.

“...when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, "Who are my supporters for Allāh?" The disciples said, "We are supporters of Allāh." And a faction of the Children of Israel believed and a faction disbelieved. So We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became dominant.”

The true followers of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, were also granted spiritual superiority over all others because of their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, even if they did not possess worldly authority or social influence.

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 Musa, 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.”

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 62 – Al Jumu'ah, Verse 1

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ
الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١﴾

*“Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is exalting Allah,
the Sovereign, the Holy, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.”*

“Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is exalting Allah...”

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.

“Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is exalting Allah...”

This includes those who are unwilling as their exalting Allah, the Exalted, includes the fact that they are powerless in the face of 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...”

“...Allāh, the Sovereign...”

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.”

“...Allah...the Holy...”

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.

“...Allah...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.

“...Allah...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 62 – Al Jumu'ah, Verses 2-4

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ
آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن
قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢﴾

وَأَخْرَجَ مِنْهُمْ لِمَا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣﴾

ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ
﴿٤﴾

“It is He who has sent among the unlettered [Arabs] a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom - although they were before in clear error.

And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

That is the bounty of Allah, which He gives to whom He wills, and Allah is the possessor of great bounty.”

“It is He who has sent among the unlettered [Arabs] a Messenger...although they were before in clear error.”

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.

“It is He who has sent among the unlettered [Arabs] a Messenger from themselves...”

This indicates that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was no stranger to the non-muslims of Mecca.

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?"

“It is He who has sent among the unlettered [Arabs] a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses...although they were before in clear error. And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them...”

This includes being a practical role model for people to follow.

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.

“It is He who has sent among the unlettered [Arabs] a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them...although they were before in clear error. And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them...”

This purification only occurs when one fulfils 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.

“It is He who has sent among the unlettered [Arabs] a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them...although they were before in clear error. And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them...”

This purification only occurs when one learns and acts on the teachings of Islam.

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 has sent among the unlettered [Arabs] a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them...although they were before in clear error. And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them...”

This purification only occurs when one learns and acts on the teachings of Islam.

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.

“It is He who has sent among the unlettered [Arabs] a Messenger from themselves...and teaching them the Book and wisdom - although they were before in clear error. And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them...”

The book in these verses could be referring to the law and wisdom could be referring to good morals found within the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Both are needed to achieve success as law without good morals will lead to corruption when the law is implemented in the wrong way and good morals without law will lead to oppression. In addition, the book refers to knowledge and the wisdom meaning, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, teaches a Muslim how to implement the knowledge in the correct way so that they benefit themselves and others in both worlds. Either way, combining both the book and wisdom correctly leads to noble character.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many Muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly they must also treat others with good

character otherwise they will not succeed as the only truly successful people are the believers.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be rewarded like the Muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

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The book in these verses could be referring to the law and wisdom could be referring to good morals found within the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Both are needed to achieve success as law without good morals will lead to corruption when the law is implemented in the wrong way and good morals without law will lead to oppression. In addition, the book refers to knowledge and the wisdom meaning, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, teaches a Muslim how to implement the knowledge in the correct way so that they benefit themselves and others in both worlds. Either way, combining both the book and wisdom correctly leads to noble character.

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 has sent among the unlettered [Arabs] a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom - although they were before in clear error. And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them...”

The last part of these verses indicates the importance of carrying on the mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These verses therefore 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.

“It is He who has sent among the unlettered [Arabs] a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom - although they were before in clear error. And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them...”

The book in these verses could be referring to the law and wisdom could be referring to good morals found within the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Both are needed to achieve success as law without good morals will lead to corruption when the law is implemented in the wrong way and good morals without law will lead to oppression. In addition, the book refers to knowledge and the wisdom meaning, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, teaches a Muslim how to implement the knowledge in the correct way so that they benefit themselves and others in both worlds. Either way, combining both the book and wisdom correctly leads to noble character.

In addition, the last part of these verses indicates the importance of carrying on the mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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

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

In addition, it is extremely difficult to teach good manners to children when they get older and become set in their ways. Today is the day a muslim should truly reflect on the gift they wish to impart to their children and relatives. This is how a muslim sends forward good to the hereafter but also leaves good behind as a righteous child which supplicates for their deceased parent benefits them. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted.

“It is He who has sent among the unlettered [Arabs] a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom - although they were before in clear error. And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them...”

Generally speaking, unlettered also includes the one who does not possess religious knowledge, which aids them in succeeding in both worlds, even if they possess much worldly knowledge.

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.

“It is He who has sent among the unlettered [Arabs] a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom - although they were before in clear error. And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them...That is the bounty of Allāh, which He gives to whom He wills, and Allāh is the possessor of great bounty.”

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.”

“It is He who has sent among the unlettered [Arabs] a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom - although they were before in clear error. And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them...That is the bounty of Allāh, which He gives to whom He wills, and Allāh is the possessor of great bounty.”

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.

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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.

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 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.

Chapter 62 – Al Jumu'ah, Verse 5

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ
الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥﴾

“The example of those who were entrusted with the Torah and then did not take it on is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]. Wretched is the example of the people who deny the signs of Allah. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.”

“The example of those who were entrusted with the Torah and then did not take it on is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]. Wretched is the example of the people who deny the signs of Allah...”

They failed to fulfil the rights of the Torah. Muslims must avoid following in their footsteps and instead 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.

“The example of those who were entrusted with the Torah and then did not take it on is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]. Wretched is the example of the people who deny the signs of Allah...”

They failed to fulfil the rights of the Torah. Muslims must avoid following in their footsteps and instead fulfil the rights of the Holy Quran. Failing to behave in this manner is a branch of denying 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.

“The example of those who were entrusted with the Torah and then did not take it on is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]. Wretched is the example of the people who deny the signs of Allah...”

Another aspect of this is when one intentionally misinterprets and conceals divine knowledge for the sake of worldly gain.

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.

“The example of those who were entrusted with the Torah and then did not take it on is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]. Wretched is the example of the people who deny the signs of Allah...”

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.

“The example of those who were entrusted with the Torah and then did not take it on is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]. Wretched is the example of the people who deny the signs of Allah. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.”

This also means that they failed to accept the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran, which the Torah commanded them to do.

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.

“...Wretched is the example of the people who deny the signs of Allah...”

The two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, are the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One must avoid this behaviour by 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 Allah 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.

“...And Allah 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 62 – Al Jumu'ah, Verses 6-8

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا إِن زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لِلَّهِ
مِن دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٦﴾

وَلَا يَتَمَنَّوْنَهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ
﴿٧﴾

قُلْ إِنَّا أَلْمَوْتُ الَّذِي تَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ
ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾

"Say, "O you who are Jews, if you claim that you are allies of Allah, excluding the [other] people, then wish for death, if you should be truthful."

But they will not wish for it [death], ever, because of what their hands have put forth. And Allah is Knowing of the wrongdoers.

Say, "Indeed, the death from which you flee - indeed, it will meet you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you about what you used to do."

“Say, “O you who are Jews, if you claim that you are allies of Allah, excluding the [other] people, then wish for death, if you should be truthful.” But they will not wish for it [death], ever, because of what their hands have put forth. And Allah is Knowing of the wrongdoers.”

These verses are connected to chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 18:

“But the Jews and the Christians say, “We are the children of Allāh and His beloved.” Say, “Then why does He punish you for your sins?”...”

An aspect of the people of the book's wishful thinking and assumption was that they were the chosen ones and they therefore were guaranteed salvation in both worlds even if they did not bother learning and acting on their divine scriptures.

Because of this misguided mentality they abandoned learning and acting on their faith even though they were clearly commanded countless times to adhere to the teachings of their divine scriptures. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 63:

“And [recall] when We took your covenant, [O Children of Israel, to abide by the Torah] and We raised over you the mount, [saying], “Take what

We have given you with determination and remember what is in it that perhaps you may become righteous."

Unfortunately, many Muslims have followed in their footsteps by abandoning learning and acting on the teachings of Islam and instead assume that as they belong to the nation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they are the chosen ones and are guaranteed salvation. This was the same error in judgement made by the people of the book and Allah, the Exalted, punished them for it.

If Muslims desire to avoid sharing the fate of the people of the book they must fulfill the role given to them by Allah, the Exalted, as His ambassadors, a role which the people of the book failed to fulfil. 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.

“Say, “O you who are Jews, if you claim that you are allies of Allah, excluding the [other] people, then wish for death, if you should be truthful.” But they will not wish for it [death], ever, because of what their hands have put forth. And Allah is Knowing of the wrongdoers.”

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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.”

“Say, “O you who are Jews, if you claim that you are allies of Allah, excluding the [other] people, then wish for death, if you should be truthful.” But they will not wish for it [death], ever, because of what their hands have put forth. And Allah is Knowing of the wrongdoers.”

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An aspect of the people of the book's wishful thinking and assumption was that they were the chosen ones and they therefore were guaranteed salvation in both worlds even if they did not bother learning and acting on their divine scriptures.

Because of this misguided mentality they abandoned learning and acting on their faith even though they were clearly commanded countless times to adhere to the teachings of their divine scriptures. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 63:

“And [recall] when We took your covenant, [O Children of Israel, to abide by the Torah] and We raised over you the mount, [saying], “Take what We

have given you with determination and remember what is in it that perhaps you may become righteous.”

The greatest sin they put forward to the hereafter which prevented them from wishing for death was rejecting 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 Allāh is Knowing of the wrongdoers.”

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 Allāh is Knowing of the wrongdoers.”

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 Allāh is Knowing of the wrongdoers.”

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, “Indeed, the death from which you flee - indeed, it will meet you...””

This attitude can be adopted when one fails to practically prepare for 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.

“Say, “Indeed, the death from which you flee - indeed, it will meet you...””

This attitude can be adopted when one fails to practically prepare for 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.

“Say, “Indeed, the death from which you flee - indeed, it will meet you...””

This attitude can be adopted when one fails to practically prepare for 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?”

“Say, “Indeed, the death from which you flee - indeed, it will meet you...””

This attitude can be adopted when one fails to practically prepare for 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.

“Say, “Indeed, the death from which you flee - indeed, it will meet you...””

This attitude can be adopted when one fails to practically prepare for 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?

“Say, "Indeed, the death from which you flee - indeed, it will meet you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed...””

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.

“Say, "Indeed, the death from which you flee - indeed, it will meet you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed..."”

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, “Indeed, the death from which you flee - indeed, it will meet you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you about what you used to do.””

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.

“Say, “Indeed, the death from which you flee - indeed, it will meet you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you about what you used to do.””

One must prepare for their Final Judgement 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.

“Say, “Indeed, the death from which you flee - indeed, it will meet you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you about what you used to do.””

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 62 – Al Jumu'ah, Verses 9-10

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ
الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ
لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩﴾

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ
فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

“O you who have believed, when [the adhān] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu‘ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew.

And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah, and remember Allah often that you may succeed.”

“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, when [the adhān] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu‘ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allāh and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew.”

Even though this verse mentions the unique Friday congregational prayer none the less, it is important for muslims to establish all their obligatory prayers.

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.

“O you who have believed, when [the adhān] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu‘ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allāh and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew.”

Even though this verse mentions the unique Friday congregational prayer none the less, it is important for muslims to establish all their obligatory prayers.

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.

“O you who have believed, when [the adhān] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu‘ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allāh and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew.”

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.

“O you who have believed, when [the adhān] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu‘ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allāh and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew.”

The remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, is His obedience.

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.”

“O you who have believed, when [the adhān] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu‘ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allāh and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew.”

The remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, is His obedience.

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.”

“O you who have believed, when [the adhān] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu‘ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allāh and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew.”

The last part of this verse indicates that ignorance can prevent one from being positively affected by the teachings of Islam.

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, when [the adhān] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu‘ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allāh and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew.”

The last part of this verse indicates that ignorance can prevent one from being positively affected by the teachings of Islam. 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.

“O you who have believed, when [the adhān] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu‘ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allāh and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew. And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allāh and remember Allāh often that you may succeed.”

The final part of these verses indicates that one must sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, when striving to earn their provision.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, allocated all things, such as provision, to all creatures over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth.

It is important to understand that there are two aspects in respect to all situations, such as gaining one's provision. The first aspect is what Allah, the Exalted, has decided meaning, destiny; this will occur and nothing in creation can prevent this from occurring. As this is out of a person's hands it makes no sense to stress over this aspect as they have no influence on destiny irrespective of what they or anybody else does.

The second aspect is one's own efforts. This aspect a person has full control over and they should therefore concentrate on this aspect by using

the means they have been provided such as their physical strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, which they have no control over, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to gain lawful provision in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents while avoiding the unlawful, excess, waste and extravagance.

To conclude, a muslim should never waste time stressing over things they have no control or influence over instead they should use the means they possess and act on those things which they have control over according to the teachings of Islam. This is what Allah, the Exalted, has commanded.

“O you who have believed, when [the adhān] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu‘ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allāh and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew. And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allāh and remember Allāh often that you may succeed.”

The final part of these verses indicates that one must sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, when striving to earn their provision.

It is important to note, that the specific things which have been labelled unlawful by Islam such as alcohol are not the only things which are unlawful. In fact, even lawful things can become unlawful if they have been gained through unlawful things. For example, a lawful food can become unlawful if it is bought with unlawful wealth. Therefore, it is important for muslims to ensure they only deal with lawful things as it only takes one element of the unlawful to ruin someone.

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2346, that the one who utilises the unlawful will have all their supplications rejected. If their supplications are rejected by Allah, the Exalted, can one expect any of their good deeds to be accepted? This in fact has been answered in another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1410. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that Allah, the Exalted, only accepts the lawful. Therefore, any deed which has a

foundation in the unlawful such as performing the Holy Pilgrimage with unlawful wealth will be rejected.

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3118, that this type of person will be sent to Hell on Judgement Day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 188:

“And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful].”

“O you who have believed, when [the adhān] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu‘ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allāh and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew. And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allāh and remember Allāh often that you may succeed.”

The final part of these verses indicates that one must sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, during their day to day activities.

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.

“O you who have believed, when [the adhān] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu‘ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allāh and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew. And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allāh and remember Allāh often that you may succeed.”

The final part of these verses indicates that one must sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, during their day to day activities.

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.

“O you who have believed, when [the adhān] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu‘ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allāh and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew. And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allāh and remember Allāh often that you may succeed.”

The final part of these verses indicates that one must sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, during their day to day activities.

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.

“O you who have believed, when [the adhān] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu‘ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allāh and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew. And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allāh and remember Allāh often that you may succeed.”

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.

Chapter 62 – Al Jumu'ah, Verse 11 of 11

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَمَعَةً انفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا قُلْ مَا
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِوِ وَمِنَ النَّجْرَةِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّزِقِينَ ﴿١١﴾

“When [on one occasion] when they saw a transaction or a diversion, they rushed to it and left you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], standing. Say, “What is with Allah is better than diversion and a transaction, and Allah is the best of providers.””

“When [on one occasion] when they saw a transaction or a diversion, they rushed to it and left you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], standing...”

During a Friday sermon some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, left it in order to tend to a trade caravan which arrived in Medina. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1997.

Even though this was not a sin none the less, it contradicted the correct manners one must show the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 62:

“The believers are only those who believe in Allāh and His Messenger and, when they are [meeting] with him for a matter of common interest, do not depart until they have asked his permission. Indeed, those who ask your [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] permission, - those are the ones who believe in Allāh and His Messenger. So when they ask your permission due to something of their affairs, then give permission to whom you will among them...”

This 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 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.

“When [on one occasion] when they saw a transaction or a diversion, they rushed to it and left you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], standing. Say, “What is with Allāh is better than diversion and a transaction...””

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Remaining with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would have led to an increase in useful knowledge. This is better than trade and diversion.

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.

“When [on one occasion] when they saw a transaction or a diversion, they rushed to it and left you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], standing. Say, “What is with Allāh is better than diversion and a transaction, and Allāh is the best of providers.””

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fear poverty in pursuit of beneficial knowledge as their Provider is Allah, the Exalted. This does not mean one should abandon their lawful livelihood rather, they should strike a balance between the two while leaning towards gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

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.

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fear poverty in pursuit of beneficial knowledge as their Provider is Allah, the Exalted. This does not mean one should abandon their lawful livelihood rather, they should strike a balance between the two while leaning towards gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Behaving in this manner 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.

“...Say, "What is with Allāh is better than diversion and a transaction...””

One must gain the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter in order to truly recognize this truth.

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.

“...Say, "What is with Allāh is better than diversion and a transaction...””

One must gain the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter in order to truly recognize this truth.

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.”

“...Say, "What is with Allāh is better than diversion and a transaction...””

One must gain the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter in order to truly recognize this truth.

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...”

“...Say, "What is with Allāh is better than diversion and a transaction..."”

One must gain the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter in order to truly recognize this truth.

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, "What is with Allāh is better than diversion and a transaction...””

One must gain the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter in order to truly recognize this truth. 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.

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