

Creating Unity

PodSeries - Vol 120



Achieve Noble Character

Creating Unity

ShaykhPod Books

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Acknowledgements

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

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

Compiler's Notes

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

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

Introduction

The following short book discusses some characteristics which aid in Creating Unity within society. This discussion is based on Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, Verses 9-10 of the Holy Quran:

“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allah. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly. The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy.”

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

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

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

Creating Unity

Chapter 49 – Al Hujurat, Verses 9-10

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ
بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ
اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ
الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٩﴾

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allah. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly.

Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.

The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy.”

“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two... The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers...”

A muslim must not adopt the opposite attitude by causing separation between people.

A sign of hypocrisy is that a person spreads corruption in society. This negative characteristic affects all social levels beginning from a family unit and ending at the international level. This type of person dislikes seeing people uniting on good as this may cause the worldly status of others to increase beyond their own. This drives them to backbiting and slander in order to cause people to turn against each other. Their evil attitude destroys their own ties of kinship and when they observe other families who are happy it drives them to destroy their happiness also. They are fault finders who dedicate their time unveiling the mistakes of others in order to drag their social status down. They are the first people to begin gossiping about others and act deaf whenever good things are spoken about. Peace and quiet disturbs them so they seek to create problems in order to entertain themselves. They fail to remember the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546. It advises that whoever covers the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will cover their faults. But whoever seeks out and unveils the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will expose their faults to the people. So in reality, this type of person is only unveiling their own faults to society even though they believe they are exposing the faults of others.

“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two... The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers...”

This verse is connected to chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”

In this verse Allah, the exalted, explains how people should conduct themselves when conversing with others so that they derive benefit for themselves and others. The first is that when muslims gather they should discuss how to benefit others which encompasses charity in the form of wealth and physical aid. If a muslim is not in a position to help a needy person then this is an excellent way of gaining reward equal to actually helping them. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6800, advises that the one who inspires someone else towards good will be rewarded as if they performed the good action themselves. If one cannot aid someone in difficulty or inspire another to fulfill this task they can at least encourage others to supplicate for the one in need. Supplication for an absent person causes the Angels to pray for the supplicator. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534. This mentality can inspire the group to visit the needy person which provides them with emotional support. This has a powerful psychological impact and provides them with a new mode of strength when dealing with their hardship. The

important thing to note is that when one mentions the situation of a needy person their intention must be to aid them in their hour of need. It should never be for the sake of passing time and making them a target of ridicule.

The second way to gain blessings is when one converses about anything lawful that will provide benefit to someone in this world or the next. This aspect includes advising others to do good and refrain from evil in every aspect of their life.

The third aspect mentioned in this verse involves conversing with others with a constructive mindset which brings people together in a positive way instead of possessing a destructive mindset which causes divisions within society. If a person cannot bring people together in a loving way then the minimum they can do is not cause divisions amongst them. Even this is recorded as a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2518.

In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, advises that reconciling between two opposing muslims for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is superior to voluntary prayer and fasting. Every good thing found within society was the outcome of this pious attitude such as the construction of schools, hospitals and Mosques.

But it is important to note, that a muslim will only obtain the great reward mentioned in this verse when they perform the righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Each person will be rewarded based on their intention not just their physical action. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The insincere muslim will find that on Judgment Day they will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two... The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers...”

This is only possible when one adopts a positive attitude thereby thinking good about others.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking well about people is an aspect of worshipping Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Meaning, it is an aspect of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Interpreting things in a negative way often leads to sins such as backbiting and slander. In all cases a muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. Unfortunately, adopting a negative mind-set effects people from a family unit to a national level. For example, how many times has a nation gone to war over an assumption and suspicion? The vast majority of scandals which are found in the media are based on assumptions. Even laws have been created which support the use of assumptions and suspicion. This often leads to fractured and broken relationships as people with this mind-set always believe others are taking a dig at them through their words or actions. This prevents one from taking advice from others as they believe they are only being mocked by the one giving advice and it prevents one from giving advice as they believe the other person will not pay any attention to what they say. And a person will refrain from advising the one

who possesses this negative mind-set as they believe it will only lead to an argument. This leads to other negative traits such as bitterness.

It is important for muslims to understand that even if they assume someone is taking a dig at them they should still accept their advice if it is based on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They should strive to interpret things where possible in a positive way which leads to a positive mentality. And a positive mindset leads to healthy relationships and feelings. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”

“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two... The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers...”

These verses also indicate that one must avoid the characteristics which creates disunity within society.

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

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

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feeling and if they strive to obtain a similar blessing without the owner

losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second is when a person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

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

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

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A muslim should remember that other people are not perfect just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess.

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

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a muslim to sever

ties with another muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another muslim. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a muslim should continue to advise the other muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

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

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

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

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another muslim. The sins a person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

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

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

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a

Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

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

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a muslim's life, property and honour are all sacred. A muslim must not violate any of these rights without a just reason. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true muslim until they protect other

people, including non-muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

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

“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two... The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers...”

These verses also indicate that one must avoid the characteristics which creates disunity within society.

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

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

Muslims should regularly observe the news and those who are in difficult situations all over the world. This will inspire them to avoid becoming self-

centered and instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about themselves is lower in rank than an animal as even they care about their offspring. In fact, a muslim should be better than animals by practically caring for others beyond their own family.

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

“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two... The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers...”

Behaving in this manner is an aspect of being sincere to others.

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

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

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not

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

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

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

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

“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allāh...”

The party obeying Allah, the Exalted, should be supported irrespective of how one feels towards them.

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

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

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many muslims now observe who is doing an action instead of observing what they are doing. If the person is

linked to them for example, a relative, they support them even if the thing is not good. Similarly, if the person has no relationship with them they turn away from supporting them even if the thing is good. This attitude completely contradicts the traditions of the righteous predecessors. They would support others in good irrespective of who was doing it. In fact, they went so far on acting on this verse of the Holy Quran that they would even support those they did not get on with as long as it was a good thing.

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

Muslims must reflect on this deeply, change their mentality and strive to aid others in good irrespective of who is doing it and not hold back fearing their support will cause them to be forgotten within society. Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will never be forgotten in both this world and the next. In fact, their respect and honour will only grow in both worlds.

“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allāh...”

The party obeying Allah, the Exalted, should be supported irrespective of how one feels towards them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“...And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly.”

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

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

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

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

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.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 if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly.”

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

“The believers are but brothers...”

With the passing of time people become divided and lose the strong connection they once had with one another. There are many causes of this but a major cause is the foundation on which their connection was formed by their parents and relatives. It is commonly known that when the foundation of a building is weak the building will either get damaged over time or even collapse. Similarly, when the foundation of bonds connecting people are not correct the bonds between them will eventually weaken or even break. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brought the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, together he formed the bonds between them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, most Muslims today bring people together for the sake of tribalism, brotherhood and to show off to other families. Even though, the majority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not related but as the foundation of the bonds connecting them was correct namely, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, their bonds grew from strength to strength. Whereas, many Muslims nowadays are related by blood yet, with the passing of time become separated as the foundation of their bonds was based on falsehood namely, tribalism and similar things.

Muslims must understand that if desire for their bonds to endure and to earn reward for fulfilling the important duty of upholding the ties of kinship and the rights of non-relatives then they must only forge bonds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The foundation of this is that people only connect with one another and act together in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been commanded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

“The believers are but brothers...”

All muslims must uphold the ties to other muslims. This applies to all muslims whether they are related or not and if they know each other or not. Many rights of muslims have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and each muslim should strive to learn and fulfil them. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, listed five rights a muslim owes another muslim.

Firstly, they are to respond to the greeting of peace even if replying contradicts their desire. More importantly a muslim must fulfill the Islamic greeting of peace practically by showing peace and kindness towards others through their speech and actions. This is the true meaning of the Islamic greeting of peace.

A muslim should try to visit sick muslims in order to provide them physical and psychological support. It would be difficult to visit all sick muslims but if each muslim at least visited their sick relatives then the vast majority of the sick would obtain this support. All forms of vain or sinful speech and actions must be avoided such as, gossiping otherwise a muslim will only earn sins instead of blessings.

A muslim when possible should attend the funeral of other muslims as each attendee supplicates for the deceased to be forgiven. Therefore, the more muslims in attendance the better. Just like one desires others to attend their funeral and supplicate for them they too should do this for others. In this particular deed is a good reminder for a muslim that they too will eventually die. Hopefully, this will alter their behaviour for the better so that they better prepare for their own death by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims should accept the invitation for meals and social events as long as no unlawful or disliked activities take place, which in this day and age is quite rare. An important point to note is that some muslims attend social events where unlawful or disliked things occur and cite this Hadith to support their actions. One should not misinterpret the divine teachings in order to fulfil their own desires as this is clear misguidance and an invitation to divine punishment.

Finally, the main Hadith concludes by advising muslims to supplicate for the muslim who praises Allah, the Exalted, after they sneeze.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated an extremely important duty in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2714, which is to offer good and sincere advice to other muslims.

Firstly, it is important to note good advice should be offered to all irrespective of their faith. This is clearly advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. Muslims should advise others the way they wish people to advise them. One should never let their ill feelings prevent them from fulfilling this duty as one who purposely offers bad advice will find that people give them incorrect advice. Offering sincere advice is so important that as mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1925, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would take a pledge from people to fulfil this duty along with fulfilling the obligatory duties such as the prayer. The fact that sincerely advising others has been placed with these obligatory duties highlights its importance. So a muslim should never overlook this fact.

Every person, irrespective of faith, loves to obtain the things which would benefit them and protect them from harmful things. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for other muslims what they love for themselves. This should be shown through one's actions by striving to ensure others obtain those things they love for themselves by any means available to them. A muslim should not merely claim this through their words.

Another right all muslims have is that one should sincerely supplicate for them. This is an aspect of being merciful to each other which has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 29:

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those with him are...merciful among themselves...”

In fact, when a muslim supplicates for another they themselves benefit from it. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6927, when a muslim secretly supplicates for other muslims an Angel supplicates for them.

Another important right is that a muslim should love and hate for other muslims what they love and hate for themselves. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made this a condition of sincere belief in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

A muslim should be happy at the lawful joy of another muslim and hope it lasts for them. They should get sad when another muslim faces a difficulty and help them through it even if it is just a supplication on their behalf. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6011, that muslims are like one body. If a part of the body is ill then the rest of the body shares in the pain.

A muslim should never cause unjustified harm to another muslim or non-muslim through their words or actions as this is the very definition of a muslim given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2627. In fact,

keeping people safe from one's harm is an act of charity a person does to themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250. This is an act of charity to oneself as it protects them from the punishment of Allah, the Exalted.

The rights of other muslims include removing any obstacles from their path. This includes physical obstacles as well as figurative obstacles which can cause them harm. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6670, advises that a person will be granted Paradise for removing a tree which was blocking the path used by fellow muslims.

It is the right of a muslim that other muslims help them when they are oppressed by any means necessary such as, financial help, and help those muslims who commit oppression by warning them about the consequences of this behaviour. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6952. It is important to note, advice should only be given if the adviser is safe from the oppressor's harm.

A muslim is not allowed to sever ties with another muslim for more than three days over a worldly reason. This has been made clear in many Hadiths such as the one found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1932. Turning away from another muslim in such a manner is such a serious issue that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1740, that Allah, the Exalted, forgives all muslims every Monday and Thursday except those who have forsaken another muslim until they reconcile.

Another right is that a muslim should not behave arrogantly with other muslims. Instead, they should demonstrate humility which always leads to affection and the spread of love within society. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4895. Conversely, arrogance and pride only lead to social barriers and segregation of societies. If a muslim is treated with arrogance they should not reply in the same manner instead they should hold to patience and forgiveness.

In fact, being humble towards others irrespective of their social status is a characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1415, he would never dislike walking with the poor and needy in order to fulfil their needs.

It is important for a muslim to never pay any attention to rumours or gossip about other muslims as in most cases they are either completely untrue or contain a few facts mixed with allot of fiction. In many cases, even the truth has been twisted out of context in order to fulfil someone's evil desires. A muslim should disregard what has been said and advise the gossiper to sincerely repent. They should never repeat the gossip to others nor mention the gossiper to others. By concealing this they should hope Allah, the Exalted, will conceal their faults in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930.

In addition, a muslim should never backbite or slander other muslims as this is a major sin. In fact, one Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 290, warns that the tale bearer will not enter Paradise.

It is a duty of a muslim to strive within their means to aid other muslims from any distress. It is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225, that whoever does this will be relieved of a hardship on the Day of Judgment. The same Hadith advises that whoever relieves the financial burden of another muslim Allah, the Exalted, will relieve them in both worlds. So muslims should be kind towards those who are indebted to them.

Another right a muslim has over other muslims is that if a muslim wrongs another muslim and then seeks forgiveness from them the victim should forgive them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This will result in Allah, the Exalted, forgiving the victim of their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6592, that whoever forgives others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be blessed with more honour.

In addition, a muslim should treat other muslims according to their status which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1921. Meaning, elders should be treated with respect and the young with mercy. This Hadith warns that those who do not behave in this manner do not belong to the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 357, advises that a part of respecting Allah, the Exalted, is showing respect to the elderly. All people are a part of the creation of Allah, the Exalted, so respecting them according to the teachings of Islam is in fact respecting the Creator namely, Allah, the Exalted.

Islam teaches muslims that what they give is what they shall receive. According to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2022, when a young person honours and respects an elderly person because of their age Allah, the Exalted, will appoint someone to honour them if and when they reach elderly age.

Another right a muslim owes to other muslims is to be cheerful with them as long as sins are avoided. In fact, smiling to another muslim in order to comfort them is recorded as a charity. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1956.

The one who is easy to deal with, soft and mild mannered towards other muslims has been given the glad tidings of protection from the fire of Hell in

a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2488. A part of being cheerful is speaking kindly to others. This is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7512, that this is a deed which protects one from the fire of Hell. In fact, a person who acts on this has been promised a beautiful chamber in Paradise in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1984.

It is a duty on muslims to correct the problems between other muslims according to their capacity. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2509, that doing this is better than voluntary prayer, fasting or charity.

Another right a muslim has over other muslims is that one should conceal their faults. It has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930, that Allah, the Exalted, will cover the faults of a muslim who conceals the faults of others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546, warns that whoever exposes the faults of others will have their faults exposed by Allah, the Exalted. This does not mean a muslim should ignore the sins of others. But it means they should gently and privately advise the sinner to sincerely repent and not mention their sin to others. Even if a muslim desires to teach others not to commit a similar sin they should follow the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and advise others without naming people. An example of this is recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6979. A muslim should therefore screen the defects of others just as Allah, the Exalted, screens their defects and the mistakes of all others.

A muslim should always avoid any situation which causes suspicion and doubt in the mind of other muslims. This is in order to protect them from sins which others who are suspicious might commit such as backbiting and slander. Extending this protection to other muslims is a part of loving good for them just as one loves good for themself. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3101, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once met his wife during the night. At the same time two Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, walked by hurriedly. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, called and informed them he was meeting his wife and not a strange woman. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, made it clear that an incorrect thought did not even cross their minds. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, only responded in this manner in order to teach all muslims that one should clarify any activity which could be seen as suspicious in order to protect the thoughts of other muslims.

This is connected to another pious characteristic. It is when one avoids doing things which are lawful in order to prevent other muslims feeling bad. For example, a husband not publically showing affection to his wife in front of other muslims, such as his sister. Even though, this is completely lawful but doing it in front of his sister might make her feel bad especially if her husband does not do things like that with her. This is a higher level of noble character which is not obligatory but a great virtue.

Another right muslims have over other muslims is that they should be greeted with the Islamic greeting of peace. This should include the muslims one knows and those a muslim does not know. Many Hadiths discuss the importance and virtue of doing this good deed. For example, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 68, links spreading the greeting of peace to other muslims to gaining entry into Paradise. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 86:

“And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet [in return] with one better than it or [at least] return it [in a like manner]...”

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2706, advises that a muslim should extend the greeting of peace when they meet another muslim and when they leave them.

It is important to note, the Islamic greeting of peace is an indication that a muslim should not only welcome a muslim with peaceful words but they must maintain kind words throughout every conversation. In addition, this spreading of peace should be shown through a muslim's actions not just words. This is the true meaning of extending the Islamic greeting of peace to others.

A muslim should also follow the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by shaking hands with other muslims

when they extend the greeting of peace to them. In fact, the muslims who do this and avoid any sins during their conversation will have their minor sins forgiven before they separate. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5212.

It is a duty on all muslims to defend the rights of other muslims as much as they can without committing sins or harming themselves. For example, they should protect the honour of other muslims which are often violated behind their backs in the form of backbiting and slander. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931, that whoever protects the honour of another muslim will be protected from the fire of Hell on Judgment Day.

If another muslim shows bad manners it is a duty on other muslims to maintain good manners with them. In addition, they should advise them in private to change their character for the better. Doing so in public can lead to their embarrassment and it is a duty of a muslim not to embarrass other muslims. In addition, a person who is embarrassed will more likely become angered and they therefore are less likely to accept the good advice which has been given to them.

“...And fear Allāh that you may receive mercy.”

Piety/Fearing Allah, the Exalted, cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the

first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

“...And fear Allāh that you may receive mercy.”

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

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

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a

student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

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