

Lessons from Other Nations

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Achieve Noble Character

Lessons from Other Nations

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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 Lessons from Other Nations. This discussion is based on Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, Verses 40-48 of the Holy Quran:

“O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me], and be afraid of [only] Me. And believe in what I have sent down confirming that which is [already] with you [people of the book], and be not the first to disbelieve in it. And do not exchange My signs for a small price, and fear [only] Me. And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it]. And establish prayer and give zakah and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience]. Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason? And seek help through patience and prayer; and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah]. Who are certain that they will meet their Lord and that they will return to Him. O Children of Israel, remember My favor that I have bestowed upon you and that I preferred you over the worlds [i.e., peoples]. And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be aided.”

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.

Lessons from Other Nations

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 40

يٰۤاَيُّهَا اِسْرٰٓءِيْلَ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتِيْ الَّتِيْ اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاَوْفُوْا بِعَهْدِيْ اُوْفٍ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَاِيْنِيْ فَاَرْهَبُوْنَ



“O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me], and be afraid of [only] Me.”

“O Children of Israel...”

Allah, the Exalted, referred to the Jews and Christians – the people of the book - in this way as they were both proud of the fact that they were the descendants of the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, who was also known as Israel, peace be upon him. Referring to them in this way reminds them to live up to the legacy of the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, which involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. A branch of this is accepting the truth of Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran as they were fully aware that all this was the truth from Allah, the Exalted, as they had been mentioned 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...”

One of the major reasons why they opposed Islam was out of pride as they believed they were superior to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the message he brought. In reality, they followed in the footsteps of the Devil when he believed he was superior to the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and as a result he rejected the command of Allah, the Exalted. This is perhaps one of the reasons why the story of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and the Devil was discussed immediately before the discussion on the children of Israel, the people of the book.

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.

Finally, Muslims must note that the previous nations have been discussed in the Holy Quran so that they do not repeat the same mistakes they made. A Muslim should never overlook any verse or Hadith that discusses other nations as they are all important to understand and act upon so that one can avoid the fate of the former nations and instead obtain success in both worlds.

“...remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you...”

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

The Muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A Muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a Muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

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

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

“...remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you...”

Remembering includes showing gratitude for the favors of 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.

“O Children of Israel...remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you...”

When addressing the people of the book Allah, the Exalted, told them to remember the favors He had bestowed upon them so that they would adopt true gratitude and sincerely obey Him and accept Islam. But when Allah, the Exalted, addressed the Muslims He told them to remember Him directly. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

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

This indicates that a Muslim should be less concerned with worldly blessings such as wealth and more concerned with sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, it is important for Muslims to understand a key concept in Islam. Namely, there is nothing wrong with desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, but it is best to avoid worshipping and obeying Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain them. This is because these types of Muslims often only worship Allah, the Exalted, and inhabit the Mosques when they desire worldly things. But if they do not receive them they become impatient and fed up which causes them to stop obeying Allah, the Exalted. Or if they obtain them then the joy of them often makes them turn away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as they believe they achieved

what they desired therefore there is no need to obey Allah, the Exalted, anymore. These Muslims worship Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they obey Allah, the Exalted, only when it suits their desires. And because of this attitude they are in danger of becoming misguided. 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.”

These Muslims may claim that they are worshipping Allah, the Exalted, but in reality, they are only worshipping their own desires and the gifts and blessings they receive.

It is praiseworthy to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain religious blessings, such as Paradise, as this has been recommended by Islamic teachings. But it is far superior to worship Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One worthy of it and because the creation are His servants.

If a Muslim must desire gifts and blessings then it is best to aim for religious blessings as aiming for worldly blessings can shift a person's intention so that they end up worshipping the gift instead of the Giver.

“O Children of Israel...and fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me]...”

Allah, the Exalted, reminds the Jews and Christians to fulfil the promise their ancestors made with Allah, the Exalted, namely, to accept, follow and aid the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when he appeared on Earth. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verses 155-157:

“And Moses chose from his people seventy men for Our appointment...he said, “My Lord...And decree for us in this world [that which is] good and [also] in the Hereafter; indeed, we have turned back to You.” [Allāh] said, “...My mercy encompasses all things.” So I will decree it [especially] for...Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written [i.e., described] in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and prohibits them from what is wrong and makes lawful for them what is good and forbids them from what is evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them. So they who have believed in him, honored him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him - it is those who will be the successful.”

Muslims must also fulfill their verbal declaration of faith in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by sincerely following and obeying 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 fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me]...”

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 fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me]...”

This verse also means that if one sincerely fulfils their Islamic duties 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 greater the 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 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 fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me]...”

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 fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me]...”

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 be afraid of [only] Me.”

The final part of the main verse under discussion mentions the important characteristic of fearing Allah, the Exalted. 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 truly fear Allah, the Exalted, 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 fearing Allah, the Exalted, 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 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 41-42

وَأٰمِنُوا بِمَا أَنزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ وَلَا تَكُونُوا أَوَّلَ كٰفِرِينَ بِهِ ۗ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا

وَإِيَّٰى فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿٤١﴾

وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

“And believe in what I have sent down confirming that which is [already] with you [people of the book], and be not the first to disbelieve in it. And do not exchange My signs for a small price, and fear [only] Me. And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it].”

“And believe in what I have sent down [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.”

“And believe in what I have sent down [the Holy Quran]...”

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their heart 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 spiritual heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's spiritual heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. So the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure spiritual heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is a person's 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 to 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 believe in what I have sent down [the Holy Quran] confirming that which is [already] with you [Torah and Bible], and be not the first to disbelieve in it. And do not exchange My signs for a small price...And do not...conceal the truth while you know [it].”

The scholars of the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) were fully aware that the Holy Quran was divine revelation as its coming was mentioned 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...”

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. This is how the Holy Quran confirmed the teachings of the previous unaltered divine scriptures. As the Holy Quran is in harmony with the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures there is no good reason why the people of the book should reject 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 is 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 confirms the unaltered teachings of the previous divine scriptures means that when one rejects the Holy

Quran they are in essence rejecting their previous divine scriptures also. So the scholars of the people of the book were in fact rejecting their own divine scriptures when they chose to reject the Holy Quran.

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 rejected Islam out of envy and fear of losing the social status and wealth they had obtained as leaders of their societies.

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 be not the first to disbelieve in it [the Holy Quran]...”

As this statement was directed at the scholars of the people of the book it means that if they disbelieve in the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then their disbelief will be the first in a long line of disbelieving people who would blindly follow in their footsteps.

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 believe in what I have sent down [the Holy Quran] confirming that which is [already] with you [Torah and Bible], and be not the first to disbelieve in it...and fear [only] Me.”

It is important to understand that generally when one chooses a path which is different from the path of others, such as their relatives and friends, they will face criticism and resistance from them. In fact, the majority of criticism comes from a person's relatives. For example, when a Muslim decides to concentrate more on acting on the teachings of Islam and if it is something their family have not pursued themselves then they will face criticism from them. They will be labelled foolish and extreme by those who they believed would support them on their path. It is important for Muslims to remain steadfast on the lawful path they choose and trust in the help of Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in order to overcome these difficulties.

This is a common reaction from people for when a person chooses a different path in life from others it makes them feel as if their path is bad or evil and this is the reason the person has chosen a different path. Even though the person does not believe this but only chooses a different path believing it is better for them yet they will still face criticism. It is the same reason all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were criticised by their people as they chose and passively invited others to a different better path.

To conclude, as long as one's path in life is lawful they should remain steadfast and not be deterred by the criticism of others. But this does not

mean they should not try to improve their situation and character. It means they should not be deterred from pursuing their lawful choice according to the teachings of Islam.

“...And do not exchange My signs for a small price...”

This verse warns against compromising on the teachings of Islam in order to gain worldly things such as wealth. One of the ways of avoiding this mentality is by understanding that no matter what one gains from the world it will always be insignificant compared to the blessings and mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

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.

“...And do not exchange My signs [commands] for a small price...”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1337, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who offers bribes and the one who takes bribes are both cursed.

A curse involves the removal of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When this occurs true lasting success in both worldly and religious matters is not possible. Whatever worldly success one obtains such as wealth through a bribe will become a source of great difficulty and punishment in both worlds unless one sincerely repents.

In addition, without the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, the three aspects of faith are not possible to fulfill correctly namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience.

Unfortunately, in this day and age the major sin of bribery has become very common in all parts of the world. The only difference is that in third world countries it is done openly and in more developed countries secretly. In most cases, bribery involves a person offering gifts to influential people, such as a judge, in order to gain something which is not theirs. The only time a bribe will not be recorded as a sin is when one is forced to offer a bribe in order to recover their own property. The curse in this case is on the one who takes the bribe.

It is important to note, if Muslims as a whole desire to eliminate bribery and other corrupt practices then they must avoid them themselves. Only when this correct attitude is adopted on an individual level will it affect those in social and political positions of influence. The reason these people act in this way is because they observe the society as a whole acting on corrupt practices themselves. But if the society on an individual level rejected these practices no person in a position of social or political influence would dare act in this way as they know the people would not stand for it.

“...And do not exchange My signs for a small price and fear [only] Me. And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it].”

Muslims must not follow in the footsteps of the previous nations by compromising on the commands of Islam for worldly things which are paltry in comparison to the religious blessings one obtains in this world and in the next. It is vital to understand that whatever worldly blessings and success a Muslim obtains by compromising on the teachings of Islam they will always be temporary and they will eventually become a burden for them and lead them to nothing except stress in this world and even a painful punishment in the next. This outcome is obvious when one observes the many celebrities who compromised on their values and morals for the sake of worldly success.

It is acceptable for a Muslim to be flexible in matters connected to their own opinion but a Muslim should not compromise in matters which Islam advises about. This verse concludes by reminding Muslims that they should not choose the pleasure of people or their own pleasure if it leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. People will not be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted. But if a person does not compromise on Islam Allah, the Exalted, will protect them from the negative effects of people even if this is not obvious immediately.

It is important to note, that this compromise includes completely disregarding the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and twisting them out of context in order to fulfil one's own worldly desires. This has been indicated

in verse 42. The latter mentality is arguably worse as one can easily misguide other ignorant Muslims through it. The one who does this will carry the burden of their own sin and the sins of those who follow them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

“...and fear [only] Me...”

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 truly fear Allah, the Exalted, 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 fearing Allah, the Exalted, 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 do not mix the truth with falsehood...”

An aspect of this is when one adopts practices not based on the teachings of Islam in order to fit in better with the rest of society. 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 do not mix the truth with falsehood...while you know [it].”

This verse also indicates the importance of not cherry picking the duties and commands of Islam according to their wishes and desires. Whoever behaves in this manner is not following the truth, they are only following and worshipping their own desires. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”

A Muslim is not expected to achieve perfection but they must strive to learn and fulfill all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation so that they avoid following in the footsteps of the previous nations. In addition, it has been made clear that fulfilling the duties of Islam is undoubtedly within their capacity of people. Therefore, one is left with no excuses except to prove their faith in Islam through sincere actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”

“And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it].”

The final part of this verse indicates the importance of acting on the knowledge one possesses. 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]...”

“And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it].”

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 suits one's

desires. They must adhere to the 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 quoted at the beginning 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 do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it].”

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 be simply 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 do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it].”

The mentality discussed in verse 42 is linked to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 259. 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 should 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 which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell on Judgment Day 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.

The one who fails to adopt the correct mentality will adopt the attitude mentioned in the main verse under discussion. To conclude, only obtaining and acting on knowledge with the correct intention is true beneficial knowledge.

In addition, 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 do not...conceal the truth while you know [it].”

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.

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verse 43

وَاقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

“And establish prayer and give zakah and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”

“And establish prayer...and bow with those who bow.”

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

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

The bowing which is mentioned at the end of verse 43 could also refer to the importance of companionship. The people of the book (Jews and Christians) are specifically being told to join the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the complete submission to Allah, the Exalted.

It is important for Muslims to accompany those who have submitted to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated by bowing in this verse. This obedience consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Every person will be affected by their companion in a negative or positive way whether this effect is apparent or subtle. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4829. If a Muslim accompanies someone who is obedient to Allah, the Exalted, they will be affected in a positive way. It is why the Holy Quran advised Muslims to accompany truthful people. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 119:

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are true.”

Conversely, if a Muslim accompanies someone who is not obedient to Allah, the Exalted, they will undoubtedly be influenced in a negative way. This will only lead to regret in this world, such as crimes and prison, and in the next world also. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verses 27-28:

“And the Day the wrongdoer will bite on his hands [in regret] he will say, “Oh, I wish I had taken with the Messenger a way. Oh, woe to me! I wish I had not taken that one as a friend.””

Allah, the Exalted, has summed up this important principle in a few words by declaring that all friends will become enemies to one another on Judgment Day except for the righteous as they influenced each other in a positive way. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to accompany only those who are obedient to Allah, the Exalted, and ensure their dependents, such as their children, do the same. If they are forced to accompany other types of people they should minimise interaction with them and remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, without compromising on the teachings of Islam.

“And establish prayer and give zakah and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”

The previous two verses mention the negative characteristics of compromising on the commands of Allah, the Exalted, for the sake of worldly things, such as wealth and social status. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 41-42:

“And believe in what I have sent down confirming that which is [already] with you [people of the book], and be not the first to disbelieve in it. And do not exchange My signs for a small price, and fear [only] Me. And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it].”

The main verse under discussion gives the cure for this misguided mentality. Establishing the prayer increases one’s humility to Allah, the Exalted, as it is a constant reminder that they will stand in front of Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgement and be held accountable for their deeds. And it is a constant reminder of one’s servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. The one who remembers their servanthood will not compromise on their faith for the sake of wealth and social status. The obligatory charity eliminates greed for excessive wealth and instead inculcates generosity and sincerity to others. The final aspect of the main verse teaches one to adopt the correct company and role models. This will allow one to remain firm on the straight path as a good companion will encourage their friend to always sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and never compromise on their faith.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 44

﴿٤٤﴾ أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ نَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

“Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?”

“Do you order righteousness...”

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.

“Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?”

Many scholars of the people of the book would show off by advising others to do good. In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 259. 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 should 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 which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell on Judgment Day 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.

“Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?”

Before the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared prophethood the scholars of the people of the book would tell their followers and others about his coming and would encourage them to accept him when this time came. Many of these people accepted Islam when the time came but they themselves failed to do so out of envy and out of fear of losing their wealth and social status.

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.

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.

“Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?”

Verse 44 also reminds Muslims the important of characteristic of leading by example. In fact, failing to act on one’s own advice 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.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, of a painful punishment in Hell for those who command good and forbid evil to others while failing to act on their own advice. This does not mean one has to be perfect before advising others. But it means they should at least sincerely strive to act on their advice before inviting others to act on it. Those who fail to behave in this manner will never have a significant positive affect on others as their advice, in most cases, fails to penetrate the hearts and minds of their listeners. Whereas, those who act on their advice will always have a positive influence on others even if it is small. In addition, practically showing others is the greatest way of guiding others towards good. This is the reason why the righteous predecessors were so affective in guiding others successfully. This behaviour is arguably the greatest tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who not only did what he advised others to do but went beyond the normal limits himself.

Verse 44 also reminds Muslims that knowledge without practice is of no real value. Possessing knowledge of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is an excellent quality only if it is supported by actions. This is what makes knowledge useful otherwise knowledge in itself has no real value in either this world or in the next. For example, a doctor who possesses knowledge about medicine is of no value if they do not apply their knowledge practically to treat others. Similarly, a Muslim who does not apply their religious knowledge practically has little or no value to Allah, the Exalted.

“...and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?”

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]...”

“...Then will you not reason?”

If a Muslim desires to use their reason and intelligence correctly they must often practice self-reflection. Self-reflection allows one to assess their own words and actions so that they can strive to improve them. Unfortunately, the one who fails to self-reflect and instead only thinks about the reformation of others will often miss out on improving their own character and behaviour towards Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Merely performing worship will not raise someone to the highest levels of faith. Muslims can only reach this level by purifying their inner beings. This is achieved by removing the negative characteristics they possess and replacing them with good characteristics. But this is only achieved through serious reflection and self-assessment.

When one recognises their own reality this will encourage them to live like a servant and fulfil the purpose of their creation. This will lead them to recognising Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord, which is the ultimate goal. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

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

This self-assessment is vital for triggering one to take the steps needed to purify their character and soul of evil characteristics which is the path of success in both worlds. Some are so lost in the material world they never perform this important deed and therefore decades pass by without them changing one single bit. Muslims must use the time of strength they have been given in order to self-assess and change for the better before they reach the final stage of weakness. At this point they will desire to change but they will not possess the intelligence or strength to do so. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412.

One only needs to turn the pages of history to observe those who were given great power and wealth but eventually a time came when their moment of strength ran out and because of their persistent disobedience they were destroyed.

Those who used their moments of strength in the correct way by pleasing Allah, the Exalted, will be blessed by Him in such a way that even after departing from this world they will still be honoured by society.

As the majority of Muslims do not understand the Arabic language an abundant amount of worship will not trigger this inner purification. One can only reach it by reflecting on this material world, death, the grave and Hell. Because of this a single moment of reflection can become better than sixty years of voluntary worship.

Those who live without wisdom or reflection habitually make mistakes which only lead to constant stress. It is these people who lead an aimless life with no higher aspirations and move through each day without understanding their true purpose.

The pious always take time out of their day to reflect on their aims, what actions they have performed and whether they have pleased Allah, the exalted, or not. This mentality will ensure that one avoids sins, performs righteous deeds and if they happen to commit sins to sincerely repent. This mentality fits the advice given by the second rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Omar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, which is recorded in Imam Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, number 98. He advised that one should judge their own actions before someone else judges them namely, Allah, the exalted, on the Day of Judgement.

This self-assessment is the key which inspires one to sincerely repent and change for the better. This is the best stage compared to the stage where one only realises their mistakes when another points it out to them. But even this stage requires one to possess good friends and relatives who are wise and sincerely concerned over their eternal welfare instead of only being concerned with the material world. A truly blessed Muslim is the one who possesses these types of relatives and friends who aid them to adopt piety.

Reflecting at the start of one's day also ensures a person prioritises their daily tasks and saves time by avoiding those tasks which should be delayed.

The following verse describes the state of successful Muslims. They reflect on and are deeply affected by the teachings of Islam and strive to implement them in their lives. If one is affected in this way they should be grateful to Allah, the Exalted, and show no signs of pride. But if one is not affected in this way they must repent and change before it is too late. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 83:

“And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth...”

A lack of self-reflection has caused Muslims to become lost in the material world even though Islamic knowledge is more readily available than it ever was. Voluntary worship will only take one so far but to reach the height of faith they must reflect and assess their character. This will inspire them to abandon their evil traits and replace them with good ones. The vital ingredient needed to stimulate this self-assessment and reflection is Islamic knowledge which must be obtained from a reliable source. This is one of the reasons the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, that obtaining this type of knowledge is obligatory on all Muslims.

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 45-46

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

“And seek help through patience and prayer; and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah]. Who are certain that they will meet their Lord and that they will return to Him.”

“And seek help through patience...”

The beginning of this verse indicates the importance of patience. Faith can be split into two categories. One is fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and the second is avoiding the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted. Both of these halves cannot be fulfilled successfully without patience.

As people are guaranteed to face times of ease and times of difficulties it is vital to adopt patience as it prevents one from crossing the limits and committing sins. In times of ease a person must be patient from abusing the blessings they possess and instead use them according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact true gratitude and leads to an increase of blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

In times of difficulty a Muslim should remember that no matter how they react to the situation they must experience it. They can either face it with anger and complaint which results in further problems or face it with patience and receive an uncountable reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Either way a person must face the situation so they might as well receive this reward instead of the displeasure of Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, a Muslim should firmly believe everything which Allah, the Exalted, chooses is best for them even if they do not understand the wisdom behind the difficulties. One only needs to reflect on the many examples in their own life where they believed something was good but it ended up being bad and vice versa. 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 fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that every situation is good for a believer as long as they react to it correctly. If they show patience in difficulty and gratitude in times of ease than they will gain blessings in every situation. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500.

It is vital for a Muslim to gain knowledge and act on this characteristic as it is a vital part of one's faith.

“And seek help through patience...”

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. Understanding the extreme short sightedness and limited knowledge of humans and the infinite knowledge and wisdom of Allah, the Exalted, can aid a Muslim so that they show patience from the onset of a difficulty.

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 seek help through...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 seek help through...prayer...”

Muslims often question how they can mould their life to fit their faith instead of moulding their faith in order to fit their worldly life. One of the ways of achieving this is by always performing the obligatory prayers as soon as they occur for women and to offer the obligatory prayers at the Mosques for men. As establishing the prayers is the main pillar of Islam, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616, when one performs it as described it forces them to arrange their worldly activities so that they fit around their obligatory prayers. Whereas, when one either offers their obligatory prayers late or at home instead of the Mosque it becomes easy to fit the obligatory prayers around one's worldly time table which in turn causes them to mould their faith around their worldly life. The correct attitude will also prevent one from indulging in unnecessary and vain activities, such as visiting the shopping centres unnecessarily, as these often prevent a Muslim from offering their obligatory prayers on time or at the Mosque. Avoiding these unnecessary things and activities allows one to mould their life around their religion.

In addition, as offering the obligatory prayers on time is one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 611, a Muslim should adhere to this habit and not postpone offering their obligatory prayers without an extremely good reason which only occurs very rarely. If one desires to mould their life around their faith then they must fulfil their obligatory prayers on time as soon as they happen for women and men should fulfil them at the Mosque with congregation. This will ensure they prioritise preparing for the hereafter without becoming distracted by the excess of this material world.

“And seek help through...prayer...”

Even though, there are many obligatory duties on Muslims yet, the greatest of them is establishing the obligatory prayers. This is when one performs the prayers while fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes, such as performing them on time. This is because abandoning the obligatory prayers in most cases is the first step which leads to major sins and misguidance. This has been indicated in the Holy Quran. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

“...Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing...”

The obligatory prayers act as a barrier which protects one from this misguidance but the moment one destroys this barrier it is only a matter of time before they become misguided. This has been warned in chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 36:

“And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil, and he is to him a companion.”

One only needs to reflect on the people they know who have become misguided and they will realize that, in most cases, the first step of their misguidance was abandoning the obligatory prayers.

Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to establish their obligatory prayers correctly and ensure their dependents, such as their children, do the same. Parents must be proactive by encouraging children to offer their prayers even before they reach the age it becomes obligatory on them. This has been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495. Delaying this important teaching will become a great regret for both the parents and the child as encouraging an older child to establish their obligatory prayers when they are not used to it is extremely difficult. Parents should remember that they will answer for their failure to rightly guide their children on Judgment Day as this was a duty on them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. Chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire...”

“And seek help through patience and prayer...”

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 seek help through patience and prayer...”

It is important for Muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, 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, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah].”

The final part of verse 45 indicates the importance of humility. In order to fully understand humility it is important to understand its opposite namely, 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. 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 do not know the ultimate end of others or themselves. 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 is only due to the inspiration, knowledge and strength granted by Allah, the Exalted.

Therefore, being proud of something which does not innately belong to one 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.

“And seek help through patience and prayer; and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah].”

Those who are patient in the obedience to the command given in verse 45 do so as they firmly believe in their lack of power and control and the complete and infinite power and control of Allah, the Exalted. This truth cannot be acted on by someone who is not humble. The proud will always believe they know best and their knowledge surpasses the knowledge of all others. They dislike admitting their weakness and waiting for relief from the All-Powerful Allah, the Exalted. As they believe they are superior to others they expect their needs to be fulfilled immediately without the need to show patience. This is why pride and patience can never combine in one heart.

The prayer when offered correctly according to its conditions and etiquettes cannot be established by the one who is not humble to Allah, the Exalted. To prioritise establishing the five obligatory prayers throughout one's day over their desires and activities requires humility. It is a practical sign of one's complete need of Allah, the Exalted, in all their affairs. Refusing to prostrate, which is an obligatory aspect of the prayer, is what the Devil did and Allah, the Exalted, declared his lack of humility and his intense pride as a result. 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 humble understand that they are the servants of Allah, the Exalted, and must prioritise pleasing Him over all else. Only a humble servant will be patient in respect to what their Master chooses for them. Only a humble servant will put aside their activities in order to establish the obligatory prayers throughout the day. The humble are fully aware they will return to their Master and be held accountable for their deeds. They understand every blessing they possess from the smallest thing to the biggest were all granted by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The humble know that none has the power to grant them salvation and protect them from punishment except Allah, the Exalted.

Humility is achieved when one understands their innate weakness in all aspects of their life and the infinite power and control of Allah, the Exalted. It is the foundation of patience and establishing the prayer. This is achieved through gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

“And seek help through patience and prayer; and indeed, it is difficult except for...[those] Who are certain that they will meet their Lord and that they will return to Him.

Those who are firmly believe they will stand in front of Allah, the Exalted, and be held accountable for their deeds will adopt patience so that they can fulfill His commands and refrain from His prohibitions in times of ease and difficulty, as these two will dictate whether they enter Paradise or Hell. The one who fails to truly believe in Judgment Day will not remember their accountability in times of ease or difficulty. Therefore, in times of ease they will fail to show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using their blessings in the correct way and instead they will exult over what they have obtained. In times of difficulties they will fail to remain patient which involves controlling one’s speech and actions thereby refraining from the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted.

As the prayer is the thing which separates belief from disbelief, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the one who firmly believes in Judgement Day will establish them knowing that in reality it can be considered the difference between Hell and Paradise.

Generally speaking, 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.”

“Who are certain that they will meet their Lord and that they will return to Him.”

It is vital for Muslims to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they strengthen their faith. Certainty of faith allows a Muslim to truly recognize the truthfulness of Islam. It affects every organ of the body including one's inward state such as their thinking and intention. It affects a Muslim's outward state by encouraging them to adhere to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, especially during times of difficulty. It protects a Muslim from being fooled by the Devil, the material world and people who encourage them to dedicate most of their efforts to beautifying the material world instead of preparing for the eternal hereafter.

Even though, all Muslims truly believe they will return to Allah, the Exalted, for their final judgement yet many remain heedless to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which is only achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The cause of this heedlessness is the weakness of their faith. It is in fact the root of all sins. All Muslims have faith in Islam and its teachings 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. Someone who has heard about an event will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the event with their own eyes. The one who observes the signs of something, such as someone's footprints, will not be certain in the same way as the one who has seen the person who the footprints belong to.

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 and belief in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty gets the more 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.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Examples which can be found in the past nations and those placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person desires 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 throughout history. For example, some Muslims believed the Pact of Hudaiba which was made between the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the non-Muslims of Mecca would harm Islam and the Muslims. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam. This 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 and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and therefore strengthens a Muslim's faith.

Another example of how gaining knowledge strengthens one's faith is found in 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."

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they faded away as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they never inhabited the 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. This is true irrespective of a person's age. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's faith. And this certainty inspires one to prepare for the hereafter before their moment runs out.

Muslims must strive to study and act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that their adopt certainty of faith. This will take a Muslim to the level of faith

mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99, which is called Ihsan. When one reaches certainty of faith they act as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted, observing their inner and outer being. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty and will remain steadfast on the correct path under all circumstances.

“Who are certain that they will meet their Lord and that they will return to Him.”

The more one gains and acts on Islamic knowledge the stronger their faith in Judgement Day will become. The stronger one's faith in their accountability the more they will use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, in preparation for 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.

“And seek help through patience and prayer; and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah]. Who are certain that they will meet their Lord and that they will return to Him.”

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 this increase in crimes 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.”

“O Children of Israel...”

Allah, the Exalted, referred to the Jews and Christians – the people of the book - in this way as they were both proud of the fact that they were the descendants of the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, who was also known as Israel, peace be upon him. Referring to them in this way reminds them to live up to the legacy of the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, which involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. A branch of this is accepting the truth of Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran as they were fully aware that all this was the truth from Allah, the Exalted, as they had been mentioned 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...”

One of the major reasons why they opposed Islam was out of pride as they believed they were superior to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the message he brought. In reality, they followed in the footsteps of the Devil when he believed he was superior to the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and as a result he rejected the command of Allah, the Exalted. This is perhaps one of the reasons why the story of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and the Devil was discussed immediately before the discussion on the children of Israel, the people of the book.

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.

Finally, Muslims must note that the previous nations have been discussed in the Holy Quran so that they do not repeat the same mistakes they made. A Muslim should never overlook any verse or Hadith that discusses other nations as they are all important to understand and act upon so that one can avoid the fate of the former nations and instead obtain success in both worlds.

“...remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you...”

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

The Muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A Muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a Muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

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

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

“...remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you...”

Remembering includes showing gratitude for the favors of 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.

“O Children of Israel...remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you...”

When addressing the people of the book Allah, the Exalted, told them to remember the favors He had bestowed upon them so that they would adopt true gratitude and sincerely obey Him and accept Islam. But when Allah, the Exalted, addressed the Muslims He told them to remember Him directly. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

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

This indicates that a Muslim should be less concerned with worldly blessings such as wealth and more concerned with sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, it is important for Muslims to understand a key concept in Islam. Namely, there is nothing wrong with desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, but it is best to avoid worshipping and obeying Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain them. This is because these types of Muslims often only worship Allah, the Exalted, and inhabit the Mosques when they desire worldly things. But if they do not receive them they become impatient and fed up which causes them to stop obeying Allah, the Exalted. Or if they obtain them then the joy of them often makes them turn away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as they believe they achieved

what they desired therefore there is no need to obey Allah, the Exalted, anymore. These Muslims worship Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they obey Allah, the Exalted, only when it suits their desires. And because of this attitude they are in danger of becoming misguided. 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.”

These Muslims may claim that they are worshipping Allah, the Exalted, but in reality, they are only worshipping their own desires and the gifts and blessings they receive.

It is praiseworthy to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain religious blessings, such as Paradise, as this has been recommended by Islamic teachings. But it is far superior to worship Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One worthy of it and because the creation are His servants.

If a Muslim must desire gifts and blessings then it is best to aim for religious blessings as aiming for worldly blessings can shift a person's intention so that they end up worshipping the gift instead of the Giver.

“...and that I preferred you over the worlds [i.e., peoples].”

As the people of the book failed to fulfill their role as the representatives of Allah, the Exalted, this responsibility has now been given to the Muslim nation. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 110:

“You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. If only the People of the Scripture had believed [by fulfilling their role], it would have been better for them...”

Therefore, 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 fulfil their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 48

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَعَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ

يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

“And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be aided.”

“And fear a [Judgement] Day...”

One will only truly fear Judgement Day so that it affects their speech and actions when they become certain of it. This certainty can only be gained through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. For example, when one learns about the weighing of their deeds on Judgement Day it will encourage them to regularly assess and judge their own deeds as no one except Allah, the Exalted, is better aware of them than themselves. Chapter 101 Al Qari’ah, verses 6-9:

“Then as for one whose scales are heavy [with good deeds]. He will be in a pleasant life. But as for one whose scales are light. His refuge will be an abyss.”

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 fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all...”

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?

“And fear a Day when no...intercession be accepted from it...”

Even though intercession will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on behalf of non-Muslims it will be accepted for Muslims after Allah, the Exalted, grants permission. This has been made clear by the Holy Quran and many Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 109:

“That Day, no intercession will benefit except [that of] one to whom the Most Merciful has given permission and has accepted his word.”

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, the the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he is the first person to intercede and the first person whose intercession will be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

A Muslim should therefore strive to make themselves worthy of the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by performing the actions which result in this such as supplicating for it after hearing the call to prayer. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 679. But this would require one to regularly attend the obligatory prayers at a Mosque instead of offering them at home. The greatest action which will result in the intercession is learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him. A Muslim should not live in heedlessness by rejecting this duty and then expect intercession on Judgment Day as this is closer to wishful thinking which is blame worthy and of no real value compared to true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

Unfortunately, some Muslims who have adopted this wishful thinking expect to obtain Paradise through this intercession even though they do not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These Muslims must realise that even though the intercession is a fact some Muslims who will have their punishment reduced through intercession will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

“And fear a Day when no...will compensation be taken from it [a soul], nor will they be aided.”

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 fear a Day when no soul will...be aided.”

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 even though they will still 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. An example 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 become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromise 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 journeyed down.

“And fear a Day when no soul will...be aided.”

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.

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 fear a Day when no soul will...be aided.”

Verse 48 concludes by indicating that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who can aid someone in this world and the next. This is connected to another verse of the Holy Quran, 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 it 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 greater the 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 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 fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be aided.”

This verse is connected to another found in 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 one's life. This means that they should fulfil the rights of others without going overboard meaning, without compromising on the duties given 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 to one another than they do with other people. 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 the next is when they prioritise the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, 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."

“And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be aided.”

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, warns that one's lineage will not benefit them on Judgement Day if they lack good deeds.

Allah, the Exalted, bestows mercy and ranks to people in the hereafter according to their righteous deeds. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 132:

“And for all are degrees [i.e., positions resulting] from what they have done...”

A Muslim should therefore, not be fooled into believing their lineage will save them from Hell. If anything, a person who has a pious Muslim in their lineage should strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, so that they reach their level and live up to the name Allah, the Exalted, granted them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was granted the highest station in both worlds yet, he still strived so hard in worship that his feet became swollen. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7124.

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 519, that only Allah, the Exalted, and righteous people are his friends and are close to him. He did not give superiority to lineage and neither should people.

“And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be aided.”

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 fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be aided.”

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.

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