

# Lessons from Prophet Adam

(PBUH)  
**PodSeerah - Vol 4**



**Achieve Noble Character**

**Lessons from Prophet Adam (PBUH)**

**ShaykhPod Books**

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## **Acknowledgements**

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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](mailto:ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com).

## Introduction

The following short book discusses some Lessons from the Life of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, which have been discussed in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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 Prophet Adam (PBUH)

### Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verse 30

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّىْ جَاعِلٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ خَلِيْفَةًۭ قَالُوْۤا اَتَجْعَلُ فِىْهَا مَنْ يُّفْسِدُ  
فِىْهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ اِنِّىْۤ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ



*“And when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority.” They said, “Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we exalt You with praise and declare Your perfection?” He [Allah] said, “Indeed, I know that which you do not know.””*



***“And when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority...””***

The first part of this verse reminds Muslims of the very important position they have been appointed to by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the ambassadors of Islam. It is extremely important for Muslims to fulfil this duty according to their potential. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing His choices with patience. The reason Islam spread across the entire globe is 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 Hadith. 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 his 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.

***“And when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority...””***

This verse is connected to chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

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

Before one can worship Allah, the Exalted, they must first recognise Him as it is not possible to obey someone without knowledge. In addition, people must first learn how to worship Allah, the Exalted, before they can fulfil this task. Therefore, worship is followed by knowledge. This is why in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared seeking useful knowledge a duty on all Muslims. Without knowledge one will never be able to worship Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Few good deeds performed with knowledge are far superior to many good deeds performed incorrectly because of ignorance.

As Allah, the Exalted, is the One who created mankind no one has the right to be served and worshipped except Him. If an employer easily dismisses their employee for abandoning the duty they have been hired for, how can it be correct to abandon serving and worshipping Allah, the Exalted, when He alone created and sustains the creation? All of mankind have been granted free will and the ability to obey and worship Allah, the Exalted. So each person must decide whether they desire to fulfil their purpose of creation thereby receiving eternal reward or reject it and face punishment in both worlds. The same way a device, such as a

mobile phone, which does not fulfil its primary purpose is discarded people may well be discarded on the Day of Judgement into Hell for failing to fulfil their primary purpose of existence.

It is important to note, that worship refers to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This obedience must encompass every part of one's life and body, such as their tongue. It includes a person's duty towards Allah, the Exalted, such as offering the prayer and treating the creation with kindness.

Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will be given the best rewards while those who disobey Him will receive the worst punishment in this world and the next. In a divine Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2466, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, narrates from Allah, the Exalted, who declares that if one busies themselves in worshipping Him, through sincere obedience, He will fill their heart with richness and remove their poverty. But if they turn away from His worship and obedience Allah, the Exalted, will fill their life with problems and not remove their poverty.

It is important to note, that Allah, the Exalted, does not need the creation in anyway whatsoever. As clearly mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6572, people only benefit themselves with their good deeds as it raises their ranks. And they only harm themselves with their sins as they will be held accountable for them. The infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, does not change at all irrespective of if the entire creation worshipped Him or not. Allah, the Exalted, is the sole Creator

and sole Provider. It is people who are completely and utterly in need of Him. Whoever understands this and sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the purpose of their creation and will therefore be given an eternal reward.

***“And when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority...””***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

***“...Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood...”***

Corruption is when a person abuses the blessings they possess especially their social influence in order to gain worldly things, such as power and wealth. It affects a Muslim's duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and leads to much sins against people, such as oppression.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, warns that when the general public cheats each other financially Allah, the Exalted, punishes them by appointing oppressive leaders over them. One aspect of this oppression is corruption which causes the general public great distress. The same Hadith warns that when the general public break their covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then they will be overpowered by their enemies who will illegally confiscate their wealth and property from them. Again, this is an aspect of corruption where people of influence, such as government officials, freely take the belongings of others without any fear of the consequences. When the general public becomes corrupt then their leaders and other people in influential social positions are inspired to act in the same way believing this behaviour is accepted by the general public. This leads to corruption on a national level. But if the general public obeyed Allah, the Exalted, and avoided mistreating others through corruption then their leaders and those in an influential social position would not dare act in a corrupt way full well knowing the general public would not stand for it. And according to the Hadith quoted earlier, if the general public remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, He would protect them from corrupt officials by appointing people into influential positions who are just in their affairs. Instead of taking the immature path of blaming others for the widespread corruption observed in the world Muslims should truly reflect on their own behaviour and, if necessary, adjust their attitude. Otherwise corruption in society will only increase with the passing of time. No one



should believe that as they are not in an influential social position they have no effect on the corruption which occurs in society. As proven by this discussion corruption occurs because of the negative behaviour of the general public and it therefore can only be removed by the good behaviour of the general public. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

*“...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...”*

***“...Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood...”***

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

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

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

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

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

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

***“...Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood...”***

The Angels did not ask this question because they disagreed with the choice of Allah, the Exalted. As they were somehow aware that mankind could commit sins they only asked this question in order to understand the wisdom behind the choice of Allah, the Exalted. As Allah, the Exalted, did not get criticize them it indicates the importance of following in the footsteps of the Angels by striving to learn and act on Islamic knowledge, a branch of which is asking sensible questions.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever follows a path seeking knowledge Allah, the Exalted, will make the path to Paradise easy for them.

This indicates both a physical path someone takes seeking knowledge, such as attending lectures and classes, and a path whereby someone seeks knowledge without a physical journey. It encompasses all forms of knowledge, such as listening, reading, studying and writing about knowledge. The path to Paradise has many obstacles preventing a Muslim from reaching it. Only the one who possesses knowledge of them and how to overcome them will reach Paradise safely. In addition, it easily understood that a person cannot reach a city in this world without knowledge of its location and the route which leads to it. Similarly, Paradise cannot be obtained without knowing these things about it, such as the path leading to it.

But the important thing to note is that a Muslim's intention to seek and act on knowledge must be to please Allah, the Exalted. Whoever seeks religious knowledge for a worldly reason, such as showing off, will end up in Hell if they fail to sincerely repent. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253.

In addition, a Muslim must strive to act on their knowledge as knowledge without action is of no value or benefit. This is like the one who possesses knowledge of a path to safety but does not take it and instead remains in an area full of dangers. This is why knowledge can be split into two categories. The first is when one acts on their knowledge, which leads to piety and an increase in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. The second is when one fails to act on their knowledge. This type will not increase one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in fact, it will only increase them in arrogance believing they are superior to others even though they are like donkeys which carry books that do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

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

***“...while we exalt You with praise and declare Your perfection?...”***

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

It is important for Muslims to remember Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible in order to create a strong connection with Him so that they can overcome all difficulties in both this world and the next.

This vital goal is only achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The second level involves remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue. But the highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This is achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This requires a Muslim to gain and act on Islamic knowledge which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds. Those who remain on the first two levels will receive reward according to their intention but they are unlikely to increase the strength of their faith and piety unless they move to the third and highest level of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

***“...while we...declare Your perfection...”***

This can also mean that the Angels purify themselves through the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in order to please Him.

Muslims must follow in the path of the Angels by striving to purify their spiritual hearts by removing their negative characteristics and replacing them with positive characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings.

As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, when the spiritual heart is purified all the limbs of the body become purified also. This purification will encourage one to perform righteous deeds and abandon sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

There are many ways to soften the spiritual heart, such as spending time remembering Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue and heart. It is important to involve one's heart by concentrating on what is being recited so that it can become softened. But even if one fails to constantly involve the heart they should never give up. As remembering Allah, the Exalted, only via the tongue is much better than not remembering Him at all. The most superior form of remembering Allah, the Exalted, is reciting the Holy Quran. In order for one to involve their heart in the recitation they should strive to understand what they are reciting by either learning Arabic or by studying the Holy Quran in a language they understand. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 23:

*“Allah has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance [i.e., mention] of Allah...”*

The next action which can lead to a soft spiritual heart is being kind to the poor, such as poor orphans and widows. Aiding the poor reminds one of the countless blessings Allah, the Exalted, has bestowed on them. The fact that Allah, the Exalted, has made a person self-sufficient and the helper of others can soften the heart as long as the Muslim has a good intention.

Pondering about death often can cause the spiritual heart to become soft. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4258, that Muslims should often remember the destroyer of pleasures meaning, death. This will cause one to take things seriously as they know they must prepare for death and the hereafter. This preparation will lead to a soft spiritual heart.

Muslims can also soften their spiritual heart by visiting graves regularly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1569, that Muslims should visit graves as it will remind them of the hereafter. But it is important to note, that this deed will only cause one's spiritual heart to become soft if they ponder over their death, grave and hereafter. Merely visiting graves will make a person's mood more serious but it will not soften their spiritual heart until this self-reflection is done.



Muslims can also contemplate on the past nations who were destroyed by Allah, the Exalted, because of their persistent disobedience. As discussed extensively throughout the Holy Quran and Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the past nations were more powerful, lived longer and obtained more worldly blessings than the people of the modern world yet, as they disobeyed Allah, the Exalted, none of these things benefited them. Their massive and unparalleled empires faded away leaving only a few signs behind in order to warn those who came after them. When a Muslim truly reflects on these things their spiritual heart will soften which will encourage them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

Muslims must strive to soften their hearts through the advice given in this short book. Only then will they be able to focus on the hereafter and adequately prepare for it. The person whose spiritual heart is cured of hardness becomes one whose heart is soft, pure and strong. This means that its purity recognises the difference between truth and falsehood. Its softness encourages the person to act on the truth. Its strength allows one to reject falsehood through struggle and effort. When all these combine within a person through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, they will obtain success in this world and the next. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

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

***“...They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we exalt You with praise and declare Your perfection?"..."***

This declaration of the Angels makes it clear that if people desire to avoid the spread of corruption and oppression in society then they must remember Allah, the Exalted, meaning sincerely obey Him by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

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.”*

***“... They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood...He [Allah] said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know."”***

The Angels failed to see that many people would in fact live up to the covenant they took with Allah, the Exalted. Muslims must therefore strive to become a part of the people Allah, the Exalted, was referring to in His reply to the Angels. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 172:

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

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all Muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord.

This is an indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a Muslim has a choice between pleasing Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

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

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

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

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

***“...He [Allah] said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know."”***

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

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

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

## Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 31-33

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٢﴾

قَالَ يَا آدَمُ أَنْبِئْهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

*"And He taught Adam the names - all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful." They said, "Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise." He said, "O Adam, inform them of their names." And when he had informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth? And I know what you reveal and what you have concealed.""*



***“And He taught Adam the names - all of them...”***

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

There is no doubt that every Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith desires good in both worlds. Even though many Muslims incorrectly believe that this good which they desire lies in fame, wealth, authority, companionship and their career this Hadith makes it crystal clear that true lasting good lies in gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. It is important to note a branch of religious knowledge is useful worldly knowledge whereby one earns lawful provision in order to fulfil their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has pointed out where good lies yet it is a shame how many Muslims do not place much value in this. They in most cases only strive to obtain the bare minimum of Islamic knowledge in order to fulfil their obligatory duties and fail to acquire and act on more such as the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead they dedicate their efforts on worldly things believing true good is found there. Many Muslims fail to appreciate that the righteous predecessors had to journey for weeks on end just to learn a single verse or Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whereas today one can study Islamic teachings without leaving their home. Yet, many fail to make use of this blessing given to the modern day Muslims. Out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, through his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has not only pointed out where true good lies but He has also placed this good at one's finger tips. Allah, the Exalted, has informed mankind of where an eternal buried treasure is located which can solve all the problems

they may encounter in both worlds. But Muslims will only obtain this good once they struggle to acquire and act on it.

***“And He taught Adam the names - all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful."...”***

This answered the previous question of the Angels about the wisdom behind the creation of mankind. Chapter 3 Al Baqarah, verse 30:

*“...They [the Angels] said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we exalt You with praise and declare Your perfection?" He [Allah] said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know.””*

This indicates that the key to avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

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

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

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

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

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

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

***“...Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful." They said, "Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us...”***

Some have adopted a strange attitude. When they are questioned about things they are unaware of instead of admitting the truth they give a reply which has little or no foundation in the truth. This can become a serious issue especially in matters connected to Islam. A Muslim may get punished for giving incorrect information which others act on. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. This is because they ignorantly attributed things to Allah, the Exalted, or the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Because of these people strange beliefs and customs have become attached to Islam which is a great deviation from the truth brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, many of the cultural customs Muslims have adopted believing them to be a part of Islam occurred because of this ignorant mentality.

These people believe that if they simply admit they do not know something they will appear foolish to others. This mentality in itself is extremely foolish as the righteous predecessors would stress the importance of admitting one's ignorance so that others do not become misguided. In fact, the righteous predecessors would only count the person who behaved in this manner as an intelligent person and counted the one who answered every question posed to them a fool.

This attitude is often observed in elders who often advise their children on issues relating to the world and religion instead of admitting their ignorance and directing them to someone who knows the truth. When

elders act in this way they fail their duty in rightly guiding their dependents which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

Muslims should therefore, gain correct knowledge, whether worldly or religious, before advising others and in cases they are unaware of something they should admit it as this will not reduce their rank in anyway. If anything Allah, the Exalted, and people will appreciate their honesty.

***“...Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful." They said, "Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us...”***

The reply of the Angels mentioned in this verse teaches Muslims an important lesson. No matter what knowledge or status they achieve it was only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of inspiration, knowledge, strength and the opportunity to obtain a successful outcome. This attitude keeps one away from pride which only leads to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Muslims should follow in the footsteps of the Angels and not the Devil, who believed his knowledge and many acts of worship were due to his own efforts and intelligence, which is mentioned later in this chapter of the Holy Quran.



***“...Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing...He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth?..."”***

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

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

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

***“...Indeed, it is You who is...the Wise.”***

Allah, the Exalted, possesses infinite knowledge of all things and their real nature and acts according to His infinite wisdom in a perfect manner. The Muslim who understands this divine name will never object to His choices and decrees knowing that there is wisdom behind each choice of Allah, the Exalted, which benefits His servants even if they are not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

A Muslim should act on this divine name by using their knowledge and blessings according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, as this is the ultimate wisdom a person can possess.

***“...Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful."...They said, "Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us...He said, "O Adam, inform them [the Angels] of their names." And when he had informed them of their names...”***

This incident highlights the superiority of knowledge over worship. The Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, was newly created so did not possess acts of worship like the Angels. His superiority was due to the knowledge he was granted by Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 219, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that learning one verse of the Holy Quran is better than offering 100 cycles of voluntary prayer. And learning a topic of Islamic knowledge even if one does not act on it is better than offering 1000 cycles of voluntary prayer.

Learning a verse includes studying and more importantly practically implementing its teachings in one's life. And it is important to note, a Muslim will only gain this reward when they sincerely strive to act on the topic of knowledge they have learned and practically implement it when the opportunity presents itself. Only when one does not gain the opportunity to act on their topic of Islamic knowledge will they gain the reward of offering 1000 cycles of prayer even if they do not actually act on it. This is because Allah, the Exalted, judges and rewards people based on their intention and will therefore grant reward to those who would sincerely act when given the opportunity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

Finally, as indicated by the main Hadith under discussion gaining and acting on knowledge is far superior to voluntary worship. This is because the majority do not understand the Arabic language and are therefore less likely to change their behavior and obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in a positive way as they do not understand the language they use to worship Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, learning and acting on knowledge is much more likely to inspire one to change for the better. This is the reason why some Muslims spend decades performing voluntary worship yet, do not improve their behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, or people in the slightest. This by far is not the best course of action.

***“...He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth?...””***

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

The Muslim who truly believes in the unseen, such as Paradise, even though they have not witnessed it should also firmly believe that everything which occurs in their life, whether it is pleasing to them or not, occurs for a good reason even if that reason is unseen to them. So the same way one firmly believes in these unseen things they should believe in the wise choices of Allah, the Exalted, which are also unseen. This will encourage them towards patience and lead them to an uncountable reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

In addition, belief in the unseen includes belief in everything that Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, have declared about unseen matters in the past and in the future, events of the hereafter and the reality of the divine attributes and their essence. So Muslims believe in the attributes of Allah, the Exalted, in a true sense and with certain faith, even if they do not understand their essence.

Finally, this part of the verse indirectly indicates that when all of mankind accepts and believes in Islam on the Day of Judgement it will not be accepted from them if they did not believe before as the unseen has now become the seen therefore no aspect of their faith, such as believing in Allah, the Exalted, will benefit them.

***“...And I know what you reveal...”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2406, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised how to achieve salvation.

The first thing is to control one's speech. A Muslim should avoid evil speech as only a single evil word is needed to cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. A Muslim should avoid vain and useless speech as it is the first step to evil speech and it wastes one's precious time, which will be a great regret for them on Judgment Day. A Muslim should strive to either speak good or remain silent. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a person should not leave their home unnecessarily. Behaving in this manner leads to wasting time and both verbal and physical sins. If one truly sincerely reflects they will realize that the majority of their sins and the problems they encountered were due to unnecessarily socializing with others. This does not mean it was always the fault of others but it means if one avoids unnecessarily leaving their home they would sin less and encounter less problems and difficulties. This would also free up their time to learn and act on Islamic teachings more which is beneficial in all aspects of one's life.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is to weep over one's sins. This behaviour shows genuine remorse over one's sins which is a crucial aspect of sincere repentance. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4252. The other aspects include seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and anyone else who has been wronged unless this will lead to further trouble. Making a firm promise not to commit the same or similar sin again and where possible, make up for any rights which have been missed or violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.



***“...And I know what you...have concealed.”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that those who perform deeds for the sake of people, such as showing off, instead of doing them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, will be told to gain their reward on Judgment Day from the people they acted for which in reality is not possible to do.

It is important to understand that the foundation of all deeds and even Islam itself is one's intention. It is the very thing which Allah, the Exalted, judges people on according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A Muslim should ensure they perform all religious and useful worldly actions for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward from Him in both worlds. A sign of this correct mentality is that this person neither expects nor desires people to appreciate or show gratitude to them for the deeds they perform. If one desires this then it indicates their incorrect intention.

In addition, acting with the correct intention prevents sadness and bitterness as the one who acts for the sake of people will eventually encounter ungrateful people who will make them annoyed and bitter as they feel they wasted their effort and time. Unfortunately, this is seen in parents and relatives as they often fulfill their duties towards their children and relatives for their sake instead of for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. But the one who acts for the sake of Allah, the exalted, will fulfill all their duties towards others such as their children and never become bitter or enraged when they fail to show gratitude towards them. This attitude leads to peace of mind and general happiness as they

know Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their righteous deed and will reward them for it. This is the way all Muslims must act otherwise they may well be left empty handed on the Day of Judgment.

***“...He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth? And I know what you reveal and what you have concealed.””***

A Muslim should remember from this verse that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their open and hidden actions what they reveal through their tongue and what they conceal in their hearts. Therefore, a Muslim should not perform actions in secret which they will be embarrassed to do in public as there is no difference to Allah, the Exalted. Nor should they act in a way which contradicts their inner feeling namely, their intention. Each person will be rewarded based on their intention not just their physical action. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A Muslim should therefore ensure every righteous deed they perform is sincerely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, otherwise they will find that on Judgment Day they will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, it is important to remember that a good deed can become bad because of an evil intention, such as showing off. But an evil deed can never become good because of an intention, such as stealing in order to give charity.

Finally, a Muslim must understand that even worldly deeds can become good deeds because of a good intention. For example, if a Muslim strives to earn lawful wealth which is commanded in Islam in order to provide for the necessities of their family then it will be recorded as a good deed as they are fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2546.

Correcting one's intention is the foundation of Islam as without it no righteous deed will be rewarded on Judgment Day. Therefore, Muslims should gain the necessary knowledge in order to correct their intention so every lawful action, whether worldly or religious, becomes a righteous deed which will benefit them in both worlds.

## Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verse 34

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ



*“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.”*

***“And [mention] when We said to the angels, “Prostrate before Adam”...”***

The first thing to understand is that there are two types of prostration. The Angels were ordered to prostrate out of respect to the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him. This is no longer lawful and has been prohibited in Islam. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1853. The other type of prostration is for the sake of worship and is only for Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, this verse highlights the superiority of knowledge over worship. Those who performed more worship namely, the Angels were commanded to prostrate, out of respect, to the one who possessed more knowledge. After fulfilling the obligatory acts of worship and the acts of worship recommended in the confirmed traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is far superior to seek and act on useful knowledge instead of performing more voluntary acts of worship.

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

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

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

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 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 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 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.

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



***“And [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.”***

This verse also reminds Muslims that they should not follow in the footsteps of the Devil by rejecting the commands of Allah, the Exalted, otherwise they may end up with him in the next world. If one desires the company of the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Angels, they should follow in their footsteps and humbly submit to all the commands and choices of Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, it is important to understand from this verse that a Muslim is the one who has submitted to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they should not apply their own thinking to the commands and choices of Allah, the Exalted, as this was the mistake of the Devil. Muslims should instead live up to their title and submit in obedience to the commands and choices of Allah, the Exalted, without question, especially in cases of difficulties and trials. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned Muslims in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 79, that one should not question the choices of Allah, the Exalted, as this can open the door to the Devil. The Devil will use this attitude to cause one to become impatient instead of trusting in the wise choice of Allah, the Exalted. Muslims are free to use their own thinking in cases beyond the obligatory duties, those things mentioned in the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and destiny. Questioning these things causes a person to fail in fulfilling the duty of being a true Muslim meaning, the one who has sincerely submitted in obedience to Allah, the Exalted. This is what the Devil did and it is quite obvious even to an uneducated Muslim where the Devil is heading in the hereafter. Muslims have been granted the choice to either submit correctly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and end up with His

righteous servants, such as the Angels, who did the same or reject His commands by following in the footsteps of the Devil and end up with him in the next world.

***“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.”***

It is important to note that the Devil is not an Angel but as he dwelled amongst them the command to prostrate included him. Chapter 18, verse 50.

*“...except for Iblees. He was of the jinn...”*

The Devil became envious that the newly created Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, who was made from clay was given superiority to him, even though he was made from fire and performed countless years of worship. Chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 12:

*“[Allah] said, “What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?” [Satan] said, “I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay [i.e., earth].”*”

The Devil was mistaken when he declared that fire was superior to clay. Fire rages up which is a sign of exaltedness but greatness only belongs to Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, clay is an indication of humility which is a characteristic of the true servants of Allah, the Exalted.

All Muslims should avoid envy at all costs as it destroys one's good deeds just like fire destroys wood. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210. This is quite evident as the Devil's many centuries of worship and righteous deeds were destroyed because of this envy, which in turn led to pride. The reason envy is such a serious and major sin is because in reality the envier's problem is not with another person it is in fact with Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who granted the blessing which is envied. So a person's envy only demonstrates their displeasure with the allocation and choice of Allah, the Exalted. They behave as if they know better than Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil's envy led to pride. As the Devil performed countless years of worship he believed it made him special. He remained heedless to the fact that every act of worship he performed was only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. It is Allah, the Exalted, who provides the knowledge, inspiration, strength, opportunity and desire to perform a good deed. Therefore, being proud of a good deed is simply foolish. One should avoid this deadly characteristic as the person who possesses even an atom's worth of it will not enter Paradise. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The Devil refused to prostrate as he believed he was superior to the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him. It is important to note, that the Devil did not reject the Lordship of Allah, the Exalted, instead he rejected the command of Allah, the Exalted. He used his own subjective thinking instead of submitting to the order of Allah, the Exalted. This caused him to become a sinner and a disbeliever. This is a clear message to all of mankind that a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, does not apply their own thinking in matters of faith. The duty of a servant is to simply fulfil the commands of their Master. This is true servanthood. Those who question the commands of the Master only do so as they believe they

themselves are masters. But this is not true as there is no master except Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not question the wisdom behind the commands of Islam as this is the path of the Devil. Instead, they should submit humbly to them and follow the path of the cherished and blessed Angels. Chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 66:

*“...over which are [appointed] angels...they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded.”*

***“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.”***

It is important to understand that the prohibitions and commands of Allah, the Exalted, do not exist to make people's life harder. They only exist in order to benefit people in both this world and in the next even if these benefits are not apparent to people. For example, the negative effects of alcohol, which science has proven, was not always apparent such as its negative effect on the organs of the body. It only became unlawful in Islam to protect people from this and other harms. In addition, It is an aspect of faith to accept something without understanding its wisdoms. If all the wisdoms of the commands and prohibitions were made apparent then it would not allow Muslims to possess complete faith. Allah, the Exalted, does not benefit from these commands and prohibitions only people do.

***“...He refused [to obey Allah, the Exalted] and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers.”***

This verse also indicates that the one who persistently fails to obey Allah, the Exalted, throughout their day by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, will eventually become arrogant against the teachings of Islam and this in turn may lead to their unbelief.

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for Muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a Muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a Muslim is in danger of dying as a non-Muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a Muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why Muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory

duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

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

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.



## Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verse 35

وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ

فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

*"And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers."*

***“And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise...””***

If a Muslim desires to obtain a heavenly marriage in this world they must strive to find a spouse recommended by Islam. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person is married for four reasons: their wealth, lineage, beauty or for their piety. He concluded by warning that a person should marry for the sake of piety otherwise they will be loser.

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

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

not be attracted to their spouse as this is an important aspect of a healthy marriage. But this Hadith means that these things should not be the main or ultimate reason someone gets married.

The main and ultimate quality a Muslim should look for in a spouse is piety. This is when a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience. Put simply, the one who fears Allah, the Exalted, will treat their spouse well in both times of happiness and difficulty. On the other hand, those who are irreligious will mistreat their spouse whenever they are upset. This is one of the main reasons why domestic violence has increased amongst Muslims in recent years.

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

***“And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise...””***

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a Muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a Muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All Muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a Muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

***“And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise...””***

This reminds mankind of their original home namely, Paradise. A Muslim must strive hard in this material world so that they can return to their original home. This is only possible through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves 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. A Muslim must never allow themselves to become distracted from striving to return to their original and eternal home by the temporary material world.

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

It is strange how Muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short

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

***“...dwell...in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will...”***

Allah, the Exalted, gives people according to what they do. For example, the Holy Quran mentions that if one remembers Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will remember them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

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

Feeding others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is just the same. The one who performs this righteous deed will be fed food from Paradise and whoever gives drink to others will be given drink from Paradise on Judgement Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2449.

When asked about the best type of Islam the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6236, that feeding others and greeting others with kind speech are the best traits in Islam.

Muslims should make it a top priority to act on this righteous deed and strive to feed others especially, the poor on a regular basis. This is an amazing deed which does not require much wealth. Each person should feed others according to their capacity even if it is only half a date fruit



as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1417, that this will protect them from the fire of Hell on Judgement Day. This leaves people with no excuse from abstaining from this righteous deed.

***“And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise...But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.”***

It is important to understand that the prohibitions and commands of Allah, the Exalted, do not exist to make people's life harder. They only exist in order to benefit people in both this world and in the next even if these benefits are not apparent to people. For example, the negative effects of alcohol, which science has proven, was not always apparent such as its negative effect on the organs of the body. It only became unlawful in Islam to protect people from this and other harms. In addition, It is an aspect of faith to accept something without understanding its wisdoms. If all the wisdoms of the commands and prohibitions were made apparent then it would not allow Muslims to possess complete faith. Allah, the Exalted, does not benefit from these commands and prohibitions only people do.

***“And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise...But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.”***

It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, did not directly command them not to eat from the tree he instead warned them not to even approach it. This reminds Muslims to avoid doubtful and unlawful things as much as possible.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful.

Piety can be summed up to mean fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes treating others how one desires to be treated by people.

An aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things take 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 and only uses lawful things will protect their religion and honor.

If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, it 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 meaning, speech which derives no benefit nor is it a sin, often leads to evil speech such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoided the first step by not indulging in vain speech they would avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to adopt piety as described earlier, a branch of which is to avoid vain and doubtful things out of fear they will lead to the unlawful.

***“And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise...But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.”***

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

***“...lest you be among the wrongdoers.”***

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

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

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

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

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

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

***“And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.”***

This verse also reminds Muslims that Allah, the Exalted, did not create mankind in order to burden them with difficulties. In fact, He created them in order to grant them countless blessings in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

*“...Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship...”*

But in order to acknowledge His Lordship and one's servanthood a Muslim must adhere to the rules of Islam meaning, fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Without this there is no difference between mankind and animals. So this in fact, indicates the great status granted to mankind by Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, it is important to understand the greatest wisdom behind the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, is to protect a person from harming themselves and others just like the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, was commanded not to eat from a specific tree as the consequences would harm him not Allah, the Exalted. Only the things which are harmful to people have been prohibited by Allah, the Exalted, whether they recognize these harms or not is irreverent. Truly understanding this through knowledge will aid a Muslim in refraining from the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, with a positive mind-set



instead of observing them as a great burden. This positive thinking will increase one's ease in obeying Allah, the Exalted. All the things which are either of no harm or benefit a person have been made lawful. So a Muslim is free to enjoy these things as long as they do not distract them from their duties which in itself is harmful and therefore prohibited. When one understands this important fact they will realise that Islam is truly an easy and simple religion. This in fact is the most loved aspect of religion to Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287.

## Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verse 36

فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي

الْأَرْضِ مَسْنَقَةٌ وَمَتَعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

*“But Satan caused them to slip out of it [Paradise] and removed them from that [condition] in which they had been. And We said, “Go down, [all of you], as enemies to one another, and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement and provision for a time.”*”

***“But Satan caused them to slip out of it and removed them from that [condition] in which they had been...”***

This verse is connected to chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 38:

*“...And Satan had made pleasing to them their deeds and averted them from the path...”*

As mentioned in this verse the Devil fools people into committing sins or making wrong decisions by beautifying the incorrect choice for them. This occurs in situations when a person must make a choice between two or more options. It also occurs when the choice is between the lawful and unlawful and even between two lawful options. If the Devil cannot guide someone to a sin then he attempts to guide them to the inferior option, even if it is lawful, hoping it will lead to some sort of a sin. The Devil beautifies a choice by causing one to focus on its apparent benefit to such a degree they lose focus on the bigger picture and the consequences of the choice. An adult then behaves like a child who makes choices without reflecting over the consequences of their actions. This is one of the main reasons why people commit sins. In reality, if one truly reflected on the punishment of sins they would never commit them.

Something which helps in situations like this is to mentally take a step back and assess the options by comparing their long-term benefits and harms. Only when the lawful benefits of something outweighs the harm should a person proceed. The other thing which helps is to deeply reflect on the consequences of the potential options. Some choices might be

lawful but if one goes ahead with them it may make their life difficult in the long run. For example, sometimes people rush into marriage with someone they apparently love. They base their decision solely on their feelings instead of reflecting on other more important aspects for example, if their potential future spouse will make a good life partner or a good parent and if they will help them in their obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Many marriages have ended in divorce because the couple did not reflect on the long term implications of a potential marriage.

Some often rush into action and later have regrets as their choice caused them more trouble and in many cases the issue was not a big deal in the first place. This type of action can only be avoided when one reflects about the situation and observes the bigger picture meaning, the wider and long-term implications and consequences of taking a step forward.

One should not only assess if something is lawful or unlawful before making a decision. Even though, this is the most important thing to consider yet, it is not the only thing. As many lawful incorrect choices, which are beautified by the Devil, can lead to trouble further on in life.

To sum up, before making any choice a person must take a step back and reflect deeply over its lawfulness and its potential long-term benefits and harms under the guidance of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever acts like this will rarely make a wrong choice they later regret.

***“But Satan caused them to slip out of it and removed them from that [condition] in which they had been...”***

This verse reminds mankind that if they desire to return to their original home namely, Paradise then they must sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If people instead obey the Devil then they will be deprived of Paradise.

Sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, includes using every blessing one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. In this respect, worldly blessings are only a means to an end namely, returning to Paradise, mankind's original home.

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

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

***“...And We said, "Go down, [all of you], as enemies to one another...””***

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

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

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

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



***“...And We said, "Go down, [all of you], as enemies to one another...””***

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

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

Finally, as a person will end up with those they love in the hereafter according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, a Muslim

must practically show they love for the righteous by accompanying them in this world. But if they accompany bad or heedless people then it proves and indicates they love for them and their ultimate destination in the hereafter. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

***“...and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement...for a time.”***

It is important for Muslims to understand from the main verse under discussion that even though Earth is a settlement for them yet, it is only a temporary one and therefore they should treat it so. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2377, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he was not concerned over the excess of this material world and his example in this world is of a rider who takes a short rest under the shade of a tree and then moves on leaving it behind.

In reality, each person is a traveller who stays in this world for a very limited time compared to where they came from meaning, the world of the souls and to where they are heading, which is the eternal hereafter. In fact, this world in comparison to the other stages is like waiting at a bus stop. In this Hadith this world has been described like a shadow. This is because a shadow does not last long and fades away without people even taking notice, which is exactly how a person's days and nights pass away. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not mention a traveller's inn or a hotel as these are solid structures which indicate permanence. A fading shadow better describes this material world. This is because no matter how old a person is they always admit that their life flashed by and felt like a moment. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

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

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated a rider and not someone walking as the one who is walking would rest more under the shade of a tree than a rider. This further indicates the limited time people spend in this world.

Taking a rest in the shade indicates the importance of one correctly using the material world in order to obtain the provisions they need just like the rider takes the provision they need namely, rest. A Muslim should therefore, prepare for their immediate departure from this world by preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

This does not mean one should abandon this world as in reality, the Hadith clearly indicates one should make use of the material world in order to prepare for the hereafter. The rider takes a rest and Muslims must gather the things which will benefit them in the hereafter. Instead of dedicating their time to things which will leave them empty handed on Judgment Day.

***“...and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement...for a time.”***

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

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

***“...and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement [for mankind]...for a time.”***

This verse could also mean that Earth is a temporary settlement for mankind until Judgement Day.

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

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

Whoever responds to this call in this world will find the final call easy to endure and respond to. Whereas, the one who lives heedless to the call of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will not find peace in it and they will be forced to answer the call of the trumpet which will be a great burden for them to endure and respond to. A person can only ignore the call of Allah, the Exalted, for so long as the final call will occur, sooner or later, and no one will be able to avoid or ignore it. If this is inevitable it makes

sense that one respond to it now, today, instead of living in heedlessness. If one hears the trumpet blast while heedless no action or regret will benefit them and what comes after for this person will be even more terrifying.

***“...and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement and provision for a time.”***

This verse also reminds Muslims that their provision meaning, the elements needed to survive in this world, have been apportioned and guaranteed to them. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, advises that Allah, the Exalted, allocated all things, such as provision, to all creatures over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth. It is important to understand that there are two aspects in respect to all situations, such as gaining one's provision. The first aspect is what Allah, the Exalted, has decided meaning, destiny; this will occur and nothing in creation can prevent this from occurring. As this is out of a person's hands it makes no sense to stress over this aspect as they have no influence on destiny irrespective of what they or anybody else does. The second aspect is one's own efforts. This aspect a person has full control over and they should therefore concentrate on this aspect by using the means they have been provided, such as their physical strength, to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to gain lawful provision in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents.

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



## Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 37

فَنَلَقَىٰٓ ءَادَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ ۖ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾

*“Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful.”*

***“Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words...”***

As this verse does not specify the exact words he received it indicates the importance of gaining and acting on useful knowledge. This is the path to success in both worlds.

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

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

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

***“Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance...”***

Many scholars believe that the words he received have been mentioned in chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 23:

*“They said, “Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.””*

A divine Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3540, advises the importance and vastness of the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. The first part of the Hadith declares that as long as a Muslim sincerely supplicates to Allah, the Exalted, and hope's in His mercy they will be forgiven by Him.

This response has in fact been guaranteed for all lawful supplications in the Holy Quran not just for the supplication of forgiveness. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

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

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned this verse and declared that supplication is an act of worship meaning, a righteous deed. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1479. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604, advises that every supplication is accepted in different ways as long as it is a lawful one. The person is either granted what they requested or a reward will be reserved for them in the hereafter or they will be forgiven an equivalent sin. But it is important to note, that in order to receive a positive response a Muslim must fulfil the conditions and the etiquettes of the supplication.

One of the greatest supplications a Muslim can make is for forgiveness as it is a means for one obtaining blessings, avoiding difficulties in this world and a means to obtaining Paradise and escaping Hell in the next world. Chapter 71 Nuh, verses 10-12:

*“And said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in [continuing] showers. And give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers.’”*

As indicated by the main Hadith under discussion having hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, when supplicating is a condition for forgiveness. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, acts according to His servant's opinion of Him, which has been confirmed in a divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

One of the greatest causes of forgiveness is when a Muslim only hopes in Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them full well knowing no one can forgive them or protect them from punishment except Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that no matter how many sins a person commits the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is greater. In fact, it is unlimited therefore a person's limited sins will never be able to overcome it. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to magnify what they supplicate for as nothing is too great for Allah, the Exalted, to grant. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6812.

The next part of the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of sincerely seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, which has been mentioned in many verses and other Hadiths. This act of seeking forgiveness is a part of sincere repentance. It can be understood that seeking forgiveness is an act of the tongue while the rest of sincere repentance involves turning away from the sin through actions. It also includes feeling genuine remorse, making a firm promise not to commit the sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. It is important to note, that not persisting on the same sin is a condition for the repentance to be accepted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 135:

*“And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know.”*

It is extremely important for a Muslim to be persistent in seeking forgiveness as this leads to deliverance from every worry, a way out from every difficulty and support from places where one would not expect. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1518.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the greatest cause of forgiveness namely, not associating anything to Allah, the Exalted. There are two types of associating things with Allah, the Exalted: major polytheism and minor polytheism. The major type is when one worships things other than Allah, the Exalted, or in addition to Him. The minor version is when one acts for the sake of anyone except Allah, the Exalted, such as showing off. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. In fact, the one who acts for the sake of people will be told by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day to seek their reward from those they acted for, which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. The one who acts in this way will find that they will eventually be exposed in this world and no matter how well they treat others they will never gain their real love or respect because of their bad intention. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6705.

When one realises the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, they only think, act and speak for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, out of fear and love for Him. This behaviour minimises the chances of committing sins and whatever sins do occur will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. It is the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3797, that

the statement there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, removes all wrong actions.

This is the behaviour all Muslims must strive to adopt. The foundation of it is fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.



***“Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6464, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person's deeds will not take them to Paradise. A Muslim must understand that their righteous deeds are a blessing from Allah, the Exalted, in this example sincere repentance, as the inspiration, knowledge, strength and opportunity to perform them comes from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Understanding this fact prevents the deadly characteristic of pride. An atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

***“...Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of Repentance...”***

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

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

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

A Muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Muslims should act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one

desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

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

***“...Indeed, it is He who is the...Merciful.”***

Allah, the Exalted, is the Most Merciful according to His infinite status. This attribute means that Allah, the Exalted, bestows countless favours on the creation and is always extremely kind to them. He guides and enables mankind to repent and then forgives them.

This same characteristic has been attributed to others such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 128:

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

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

they show should not be selective or occasional instead they should strive to demonstrate mercy at all times with all of creation.

***“Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful.”***

To conclude, this verse reminds Muslims that if they struggle to obey Allah, the Exalted, with a sincere intention namely, to please Allah, the Exalted, then He will bestow them with the blessings required to gain success in both worldly and religious matters. But the foundation of this is a sincere intention, which is in fact the foundation of Islam. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. It advises that all actions are judged based on their intention. The Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, sincerely sought the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and was granted it. This truth has been advised in chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

It is important to note, as indicated by this verse Allah, the Exalted, does not demand perfection from people. He only desires one's sincere intention and proving this through actions based on the teachings of Islam. If one does this they will be granted right guidance and success even if they make mistakes along the way. So a Muslim should never give up hope irrespective of their past as long as they act on these teachings.

## Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 38-39

قُلْنَا أَهْبَطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ

يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

*"We said, "Go down from it, all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve. And those who disbelieve and deny Our signs - those will be companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally."*

***“We said, “Go down from it [Paradise], all of you...””***

This verse reminds mankind that if they desire to return to their original home namely, Paradise then they must sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If people instead obey the Devil then they will be deprived of Paradise.

Sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, includes using every blessing one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. In this respect, worldly blessings are only a means to an end namely, returning to Paradise, mankind’s original home.

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

This not only aids a Muslim in maintaining their focus on the hereafter but it also aids them whenever they lose worldly blessings. When a Muslim treats each worldly blessing, such as a child, as a means to please Allah, the



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

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

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

***“...And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”***

The two greatest sources of guidance from Allah, the Exalted, are the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This verse makes it clear that one will only overcome the difficulties they face in life after they practically act on the two sources of guidance. People will always face genuine concern about the future but this concern will never become intense fear which can prevent them from sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, the extreme fear of poverty can drive one to seek provision from unlawful sources. In addition, learning and acting on the two sources of guidance will prevent one from becoming overly sad (grief) over the difficulties they have faced in life. They will face sadness but this will not prevent them from sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, throughout their difficulties. Whereas, severe sadness meaning, grief, can easily encourage one to disobey Allah, the Exalted. For example, a person suffering grief and depression is more likely to abandon their obligatory prayers than the one who only experiences sadness.

The guidance obtained from Islam will allow one to obtain success in both worlds. But this true guidance will only be granted to the one who sincerely obeys and acts on the two sources of guidance. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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

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

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form

of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

Sincerity includes to give priority to his traditions over the actions of anyone else as all paths to Allah, the Exalted, are closed except the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

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

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

***“...And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”***

This verses makes it clear that Islamic teachings must be acted on in order to achieve success. Simply verbally declaring faith is not good enough to gain protection from fear and grief.

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

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

refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

***“...And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”***

It is important for Muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by learning and acting on the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a Muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, Muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a Muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:



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

Whereas, the Muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a Muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“...And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”***

This verse teaches mankind the key to avoiding stress in the form of fear and grief and instead adopt a balanced state of mind. Islam teaches one how to control their emotions in such a way that they do not allow themselves to experience extreme emotional states as these often lead to stress and mental disorders. This has also been indicated in chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23, of the Holy Quran:

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

Islam does not prohibit one from showing emotions as this is a part of being human. But it advises a balanced state of mind whereby one does not swing from one extreme emotion to another. Being sad in difficult situations is acceptable but one should not despair, which is extreme sadness, as this often leads to other mental disorders, such as depression. And being happy is acceptable but one should not become overly happy namely, exultant, as this can often lead to sins and regrets in both worlds. A Muslim should strive to obtain a balanced state of mind by remembering the countless blessings they still possess in times of difficulty which prevents extreme sadness namely, despair. And in times of ease they should remember that they will be held accountable for the thing that pleases them and if they misuse it or fail to fulfil the duties linked to it they may face punishment over it. This will prevent one from becoming overly happy namely, exultant.

A balanced state of mind is always best which prevents the negative effects of extreme moods. This will take a Muslim closer to true peace of mind in both worlds and is only obtainable by learning and acting on the teachings of Islam.

***“...And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”***

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.”*

***“...And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”***

The promise of protection from fear and extreme sadness has only been extended to those who correctly act on the teachings of Islam. In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that any matter which is not based on Islam will be rejected.

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

This is why a Muslim must learn and act on these two sources of guidance which have been established by the leaders of guidance and only then act

on other voluntary righteous deeds if they have the time and energy to do so. But if they choose ignorance and made up practices even if they are not sins over learning and acting on these two sources of guidance they will not achieve success.

***“We said, “Go down from it, all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.””***

This verse clearly advises that right guidance cannot be achieved without obeying Allah, the Exalted. This is received either directly, which is granted to the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him, or indirectly which is obtained through the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him. This again reminds Muslims that there is no path to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and success in both worlds except for the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

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

Whoever returns to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day using any other path than his will be turned away from the proximity of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

*“And whoever desires other than Islam as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”*

Therefore, Muslims must not only declare the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as their guide but they should prove it through their actions by learning and acting on the Holy Quran and his traditions.



***“We said, “Go down from it, all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.””***

This verse reminds mankind that when Allah, the Exalted, chose the Earth as a temporary settlement for mankind He also gave them a code of conduct meaning, guidance, so that they could lead a life of peace in both worlds, which is free of fear and grief. This guidance teaches mankind how to use the worldly blessings they have been granted in the correct way in order to achieve this important goal.

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

So if a Muslim desires all their worldly possessions to become a blessing for them in both worlds all they have to do is use them correctly according

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

***“We said, “Go down from it, all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.””***

This verse mentions when the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, was sent to Earth from Paradise after he was tricked by the Devil. In life a Muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties than when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if a person studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed, such as this one, involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a Muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

***“...And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve. And those who disbelieve and deny Our signs - those will be companions of the Fire...”***

These verses splits mankind into two categories: those who believe and follow the guidance of Allah, the Exalted, and obtain success and those who do not and as a result fail in both worlds.

The distinction between people by Islam is therefore based on actualizing faith and nothing else meaning, Islam does not distinguish between people based on their gender, ethnicity and social class.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a Muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from

those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or wealth. Even though, many Muslims have erected these barriers such as social castes and sects thereby believing some are better than others Islam has clearly rejected this concept and declared that in this respect all people are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one Muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A Muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the Muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

***“And those who disbelieve and deny Our signs - those will be companions of the Fire...”***

True belief involves sincerity. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted.

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

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

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never

burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

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

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

Denying the two greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, occurs when one fails to sincerely obey and follow them. This has been discussed earlier in this section.

***“And those who disbelieve and deny Our signs - those will be companions of the Fire...”***

An aspect of this punishment can be experienced in this world when one fails to sincerely obey and follow the greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.



In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“And those who disbelieve and deny Our signs - those will be companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.”***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a Muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a Muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some Muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The Muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-Muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a Muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no

protection will most likely be harmed so will a Muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A Muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

## Chapter 7 - Al A'raf, Verses 11-13

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ  
يَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿١١﴾

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْنِي مِنْ نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾

قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

*"And We have certainly created you, [O mankind], and given you [human] form. Then We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was not of those who prostrated.*

*"[Allah] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay [i.e., earth]."*

*[Allah] said, "Descend from it [i.e., Paradise], for it is not for you to be arrogant therein. So get out; indeed, you are of the debased."*

***“And We have certainly created you, [O mankind], and given you [human] form...”***

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

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

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

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

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

After understanding these divine names a muslim must trust Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. If Allah, the Exalted, created and manages the entire universe He is more than capable in sorting out a person's problems. In addition, these names indicate that Allah, the Exalted, is the One who creates and chooses all things. So a muslim should not challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to nothing except disappointment. It is therefore better to submit obediently and patiently await relief knowing that Allah, the Exalted, only decrees the best for His servants even if this wisdom is not obvious to them. As a muslim is short sighted it is better to trust in the Creator whose wisdom has no limits. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

***“...Then We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam"; so they prostrated...”***

The first thing to understand is that there are two types of prostration. The Angels were ordered to prostrate out of respect to the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him. This is no longer lawful and has been prohibited in Islam. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1853. The other type of prostration is for the sake of worship and is only for Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, this verse highlights the superiority of knowledge over worship. Those who performed more worship namely, the Angels were commanded to prostrate, out of respect, to the one who possessed more knowledge. After fulfilling the obligatory acts of worship and the acts of worship recommended in the confirmed traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is far superior to seek and act on useful knowledge instead of performing more voluntary acts of worship.

***“...Then We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was not of those who prostrated. [Allāh] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?"..."***

It is important to understand that the prohibitions and commands of Allah, the Exalted, do not exist to make people's life harder. They only exist in order to benefit people in both this world and in the next even if these benefits are not apparent to people. For example, the negative effects of alcohol, which science has proven, was not always apparent such as its negative effect on the organs of the body. It only became unlawful in Islam to protect people from this and other harms. In addition, It is an aspect of faith to accept something without understanding its wisdoms. If all the wisdoms of the commands and prohibitions were made apparent then it would not allow muslims to possess complete faith. Allah, the Exalted, does not benefit from these commands and prohibitions only people do.



***“...Then We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was not of those who prostrated. [Allāh] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?"..."***

Even though Allah, the Exalted, knew the reason why the Devil did not obey His command yet Allah, the Exalted, out of His great mercy, gave him the opportunity to sincerely repent instead of punishing him immediately.

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

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

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

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

***“...Then We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was not of those who prostrated. [Allāh] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay [i.e., earth]." [Allāh] said, "Descend from it [i.e., Paradise], for it is not for you to be arrogant therein. So get out; indeed, you are of the debased."”***

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

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

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 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 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 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.

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.

***“...Then We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was not of those who prostrated. [Allāh] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay [i.e., earth]." [Allāh] said, "Descend from it [i.e., Paradise], for it is not for you to be arrogant therein. So get out; indeed, you are of the debased."”***

These verses also remind Muslims that they should not follow in the footsteps of the Devil by rejecting the commands of Allah, the Exalted, otherwise they may end up with him in the next world. If one desires the company of the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Angels, they should follow in their footsteps and humbly submit to all the commands and choices of Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, it is important to understand from this verse that a Muslim is the one who has submitted to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they should not apply their own thinking to the commands and choices of Allah, the Exalted, as this was the mistake of the Devil. Muslims should instead live up to their title and submit in obedience to the commands and choices of Allah, the Exalted, without question, especially in cases of difficulties and trials. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned Muslims in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 79, that one should not question the choices of Allah, the Exalted, as this can open the door to the Devil. The Devil will use this attitude to cause one to become impatient instead of trusting in the wise choice of Allah, the Exalted. Muslims are free to use their own thinking in cases beyond the obligatory duties, those things mentioned in the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and destiny. Questioning these things causes a person to fail in fulfilling the duty of being a true Muslim meaning, the one who has sincerely submitted in

obedience to Allah, the Exalted. This is what the Devil did and it is quite obvious even to an uneducated Muslim where the Devil is heading in the hereafter. Muslims have been granted the choice to either submit correctly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and end up with His righteous servants, such as the Angels, who did the same or reject His commands by following in the footsteps of the Devil and end up with him in the next world.

***“...Then We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was not of those who prostrated. [Allāh] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay [i.e., earth]." [Allāh] said, "Descend from it [i.e., Paradise], for it is not for you to be arrogant therein. So get out; indeed, you are of the debased."”***

It is important to note that the Devil is not an Angel but as he dwelled amongst them the command to prostrate included him. Chapter 18, verse 50.

*“...except for Iblees. He was of the jinn...”*

The Devil became envious that the newly created Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, who was made from clay was given superiority to him, even though he was made from fire and performed countless years of worship. Chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 12:

*“[Allah] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay [i.e., earth].”*

The Devil was mistaken when he declared that fire was superior to clay. Fire rages up which is a sign of exaltedness but greatness only belongs to Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, clay is an indication of humility which is a characteristic of the true servants of Allah, the Exalted.

All Muslims should avoid envy at all costs as it destroys one's good deeds just like fire destroys wood. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210. This is quite evident as the Devil's many centuries of worship and righteous deeds were destroyed because of this envy, which in turn led to pride. The reason envy is such a serious and major sin is because in reality the envier's problem is not with another person it is in fact with Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who granted the blessing which is envied. So a person's envy only demonstrates their displeasure with the allocation and choice of Allah, the Exalted. They behave as if they know better than Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil's envy led to pride. As the Devil performed countless years of worship he believed it made him special. He remained heedless to the fact that every act of worship he performed was only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. It is Allah, the Exalted, who provides the knowledge, inspiration, strength, opportunity and desire to perform a good deed. Therefore, being proud of a good deed is simply foolish. One should avoid this deadly characteristic as the person who possesses even an atom's worth of it will not enter Paradise. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The Devil refused to prostrate as he believed he was superior to the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him. It is important to note, that the Devil did not reject the Lordship of Allah, the Exalted, instead he rejected



the command of Allah, the Exalted. He used his own subjective thinking instead of submitting to the order of Allah, the Exalted. This caused him to become a sinner and a disbeliever. This is a clear message to all of mankind that a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, does not apply their own thinking in matters of faith. The duty of a servant is to simply fulfil the commands of their Master. This is true servanthood. Those who question the commands of the Master only do so as they believe they themselves are masters. But this is not true as there is no master except Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not question the wisdom behind the commands of Islam as this is the path of the Devil. Instead, they should submit humbly to them and follow the path of the cherished and blessed Angels. Chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 66:

*“...over which are [appointed] angels...they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded.”*

***“...Then We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was not of those who prostrated. [Allāh] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay [i.e., earth]." [Allāh] said, "Descend from it [i.e., Paradise], for it is not for you to be arrogant therein. So get out; indeed, you are of the debased."”***

It is important to note that the Devil did not reject the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. He only failed to actualize his faith by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and this led to his disbelief.

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

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan

Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

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

***“...Then We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was not of those who prostrated. [Allāh] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay [i.e., earth]." [Allāh] said, "Descend from it [i.e., Paradise], for it is not for you to be arrogant therein. So get out; indeed, you are of the debased."”***

These verses also indicate that the one who persistently fails to obey Allah, the Exalted, throughout their day by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, will eventually become arrogant against the teachings of Islam and this in turn may lead to their unbelief.

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

***“...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”***

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for Muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a Muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a Muslim is in danger of dying as a non-Muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a

Muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why Muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

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

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

***“...Then We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was not of those who prostrated. [Allāh] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay [i.e., earth]." [Allāh] said, "Descend from it [i.e., Paradise], for it is not for you to be arrogant therein. So get out; indeed, you are of the debased."”***

These verses remind muslims that disobeying Allah, the Exalted, leads to disgrace in both worlds.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because

a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

***“...Then We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was not of those who prostrated. [Allāh] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay [i.e., earth]." [Allāh] said, "Descend from it [i.e., Paradise], for it is not for you to be arrogant therein. So get out; indeed, you are of the debased."”***

These verses remind muslims that disobeying Allah, the Exalted, leads to disgrace in both worlds.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

***“...Then We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was not of those who prostrated. [Allāh] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay [i.e., earth]." [Allāh] said, "Descend from it [i.e., Paradise], for it is not for you to be arrogant therein. So get out; indeed, you are of the debased."”***

The Devil failed to show sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, and this led to his disgrace in both worlds.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted.

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

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

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

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

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

***“...[Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay [i.e., earth]."...”***

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or wealth. Even though, many muslims have erected these barriers such as social castes and sects thereby believing some are better than others Islam has clearly rejected this concept and declared that in this respect all people are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

## Chapter 7 - Al A'raf, Verses 14-18

قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمٍ يَبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

قَالَ فِيمَا أُغْوَيْتَنِي لَأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٦﴾

ثُمَّ لَأَتَيْنَهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

قَالَ أَخْرَجْ مِنْهَا مَذْمُومًا مَدْحُورًا لَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

*"[Satan] said, "Reprieve me until the Day they are resurrected."*

*[Allah] said, "Indeed, you are of those reprieved."*

*[Satan] said, "Because You have put me in error, I will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path.*

*Then I will come to them from before them and from behind them and on their right and on their left, and You will not find most of them grateful [to You]."*

*[Allah] said, "Depart from it [i.e., Paradise], reproached and expelled. Whoever follows you among them - I will surely fill Hell with you, all together."*

***“[Satan] said, "Reprieve me until the Day they are resurrected."  
[Allah] said, "Indeed, you are of those reprieved."”***

This reprieve has been granted to all of mankind to a certain extent as one will not be fully punished for their sins until they reach the hereafter. Therefore, muslims must make use of this reprieve by sincerely repenting to Allah, the Exalted, before it is too late.

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

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



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

***“[Satan] said, "Because You have put me in error..."”***

It is important to understand that as destiny is something which is hidden from people it therefore cannot be used as an excuse to commit sins. In addition, Allah, the Exalted, will not question people on the Day of Judgment about their destiny instead He will question them about their intention and actions, which are both under their control. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 23:

*“He is not questioned about what He does [destiny], but they will be questioned.”*

As these two things are under a person’s control their must take responsibility for them whether they like it or not. Just like a police officer who intentionally misuses their training and equipment provided to them by the police force cannot blame the police force for their actions, nor can a person blame Allah, the Exalted, when they intentionally misuse the blessings He has granted them especially, after He has instructed them how to use the blessings correctly.

In addition, it is strange that a person will use destiny as an excuse to commit sins and excuse themselves from accountability yet when they experience injustice from another they demand justice and do not accept that this act of injustice was destined therefore, according to their belief, their oppressor cannot be blamed.

Finally, as the Devil was the first one to use destiny as an excuse anyone who follows his footsteps may well end up with him in the hereafter.

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path.”***

The aim of the Devil is to cause people to deviate off the single straight path. This path is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and involves sincerely obeying and following the Holy Quran and his traditions. From this verse one can judge how much the Devil has influenced them by assessing how much or little they adhere to this straight path.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

Sincerity includes to give priority to his traditions over the actions of anyone else as all paths to Allah, the Exalted, are closed except the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

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

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

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from before them...”***

This verse could indicate that the Devil fools people in respect to future choices and events, such as Judgment Day. This verse is connected to chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 38:

*“...And Satan had made pleasing to them their deeds and averted them from the path...”*

As mentioned in this verse the Devil fools people into committing sins and making wrong decisions by beautifying the incorrect choice for them. This occurs in situations when a person must make a choice between two or more options. It also occurs when the choice is between the lawful and unlawful and even between two lawful options. If the Devil cannot guide someone to a sin then he attempts to guide them to the inferior option, even if it is lawful, hoping it will lead to some sort of a sin, such as a person complaining about life and destiny. The Devil beautifies a choice by causing one to focus on its apparent benefit to such a degree that they lose focus on the bigger picture and the consequences of the choice. An adult then behaves like a child who makes choices without reflecting over the consequences of their actions. This is one of the main reasons why people commit sins. In reality, if one truly reflected on the punishment of sins they would never commit them.

Something which helps in situations like this is to mentally take a step back and assess the options by comparing their long-term benefits and

harms. Only when the lawful benefits of something outweighs the harm should a person proceed. The other thing which helps is to deeply reflect on the consequences of the potential options. Some choices might be lawful but if one goes ahead with them it may make their life difficult in the long run. For example, sometimes people rush into marriage with someone they apparently love. They base their decision solely on their feelings instead of reflecting on other more important aspects, for example, if their potential future spouse will make a good life partner or a good parent and if they will help them in their obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Many marriages have ended in divorce because the couple did not reflect on the long term implications of a potential marriage. Many people often claim their spouse was very different before they got married but in most cases they have not changed at all. The truth is that before marriage they did not spend so much time with them so they did not observe certain characteristics which became obvious after marriage.

Some often rush into action and later have regrets as their choice caused them more trouble and in many cases the issue was not a big deal in the first place. This type of action can only be avoided when one reflects on the situation and observes the bigger picture meaning, the wider and long-term implications and consequences of taking a step forward.

One should not only assess if something is lawful or unlawful before making a decision. Even though, this is the most important thing to consider yet, it is not the only thing. As many lawful incorrect choices, which are beautified by the Devil, can lead to trouble further on in life.



To sum up, before making any choice a person must take a step back and reflect deeply over its lawfulness and its potential long-term benefits and harms under the guidance of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever acts like this will rarely make a wrong choice they later regret.

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from before them...”***

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

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

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the

Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

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

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

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

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from before them...”***

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

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer

than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

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

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

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

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time.

This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

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

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from before them...”***

This verse could indicate that the Devil fools people in respect to future choices and events, such as Judgment Day. An aspect of this is adopting wishful thinking instead of hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

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

It is important for muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and



blessings be upon him. And whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

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

A specific type of wishful thinking which affected the past nations and even the muslim nation is when a person believes that they can ignore the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, and somehow someone on the Day of Judgement will intercede for them and save them from Hell. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact and has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less even with his intercession some muslims whose punishment will be reduced by it will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil convinces those who do not believe in Judgement Day that even if it occurs they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on that day by claiming that they were not so bad as they avoided major crimes such as murder. They have convinced themselves that their pleas will be accepted and they will be sent to Paradise even though they disbelieved

in Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. This is incredibly foolish as Allah, the Exalted, will not treat the person who believed in Him and tried to obey him like the one who disbelieved in Him. A single verse has erased this type of wishful thinking. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

*“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”*

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from before them...”***

This verse could indicate that the Devil fools people in respect to future choices.

It is important for muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, "Oh, would that we had like what was given to*

*Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, "Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient." And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves."*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them...from behind them...”***

This could mean the Devil turns a person's focus towards the material world and away from the hereafter. In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them...from behind them...”***

This could mean the Devil turns a person's focus towards the material world and away from the hereafter. One can only defeat this attack when they understand the purpose of the blessings they were given.

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

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

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

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



***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them...from behind them...”***

This could mean the Devil turns a person's focus towards the material world and away from the hereafter. It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, has only given one heart to each person. Therefore, two opposite things cannot be contained within it at the same time just like fire and ice cannot come together in one container. This is similar to how a traveller heading east will inevitably move further away from the west. Similarly, the hereafter and the material world are two opposites. They therefore cannot be contained at the same time in a single person's heart. The more one loves and practically strives for the excess of the material world the less they will love and practically strive for the hereafter. This is an unavoidable reality. A muslim should not fool themselves into believing it is possible. The two can never come together in a single heart. One will always overcome the other. Even if one believes they can indulge in the lawful excess of this material world they should realise that first of all, this will distract them from preparing for the hereafter. Secondly, it will cause them to be that much closer to the unlawful as indulging in lawful things is usually the first step to the unlawful. The one who avoids this mentality will protect their faith and honour. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. Chapter 87 Al A'la, verses 16-17:

*“But you prefer the worldly life. While the Hereafter is better and more enduring.”*

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them...from behind them...”***

This could mean the Devil turns a person’s focus towards the material world and away from the hereafter. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their

provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them...from behind them...”***

This could mean the Devil turns a person's focus towards the material world and away from the hereafter. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2377, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that he was not concerned over the excess of this material world and his example in this world is of a rider who takes a short rest under the shade of a tree and then leaves it behind by moving on.

In reality, each person is a traveller who stays in this world for a very limited time compared to where they came from meaning, the world of the souls and to where they are heading which is the eternal hereafter. In fact, this world in comparison is like waiting at a bus stop. In this Hadith this world has been compared to a shadow. This is because a shadow does not last long and fades away quickly without people even taking notice which is exactly how a person's days and nights pass away. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not mention a traveller's inn or a hotel as these are solid structures which indicate permanence. A fading shadow better describes this material world. This is because no matter how old a person is they always admit that their life flashed by and felt like a moment. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

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

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated a rider not someone walking as the one who is walking would rest more under the shade of the tree than a rider. This further indicates the limited time people spend in this world.

Taking a rest in the shade indicates the importance of one correctly using the material world in order to obtain the provisions they need just like the rider takes the provision they need namely, rest. A muslim should therefore prepare for their immediate departure from this world by preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

This does not mean one should abandon this world as this Hadith clearly indicates one should make use of the material world in order to prepare for the hereafter. The rider takes a rest and muslims must gather the things which will benefit them in the hereafter instead of dedicating their time to unnecessary things which will leave them empty handed on Judgment Day. Chapter 89 Al Fajar, verses 23-24:

*"And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance? He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life."*

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them...from behind them...”***

This could mean the Devil turns a person's focus towards the material world and away from the hereafter. Muslims should understand that regrets can be classified into two categories. The first are the regrets over worldly things such as not getting married or having children. The second category are the regrets one will have in their grave and on Judgment Day, such as not making better use of their time in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The worldly regrets, irrespective of what they are, will never be permanent as they will either end when one fulfils their desire, changes their mind or dies. They are temporary in nature as the maximum time one can have this type of regret is until their death. And they are not so significant as these regrets may lead to sadness but not severe punishment or torment. In addition, these regrets will end if a person reaches Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

On the other hand, the regrets of the hereafter are long lasting as the time in the grave and on Judgment Day will be much longer than one's life on this Earth. They will not end until one enters Paradise which may not happen or it may occur after an extremely long time as a single day in the hereafter is equivalent to a thousand years on Earth. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 47:

*“...And indeed, a day with your Lord is like a thousand years of those which you count.”*

Finally, these regrets are very significant as they may well lead to a severe punishment and torment in the hereafter.

Therefore, a muslim should ponder over this and be kind to themselves by striving to remove the potential regrets they will have in the grave and on Judgment Day before they try to remove the regrets of this world. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

*"He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.""*

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from...their right...”***

The right side or hand is normally attributed to performing good deeds. So in this respect this verse could mean that the Devil will aim to prevent someone from performing good deeds or he will aim to destroy the reward of a person's good deeds.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that those who perform deeds for the sake of people, such as showing off, instead of doing them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, will be told to gain their reward on Judgment Day from the people they acted for which in reality is not possible to do.

It is important to understand that the foundation of all deeds and even Islam itself is one's intention. It is the very thing which Allah, the Exalted, judges people on according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A muslim should ensure they perform all religious and useful worldly actions for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward from Him in both worlds. A sign of this correct mentality is that this person neither expects nor desires people to appreciate or show gratitude to them for the deeds they perform. If one desires this then it indicates their incorrect intention.

In addition, acting with the correct intention prevents sadness and bitterness as the one who acts for the sake of people will eventually



encounter ungrateful people who will make them annoyed and bitter as they feel they wasted their effort and time. Unfortunately, this is seen in parents and relatives as they often fulfill their duties towards their children and relatives for their sake instead of for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. But the one who acts for the sake of Allah, the exalted, will fulfill all their duties towards others such as their children and never become bitter or enraged when they fail to show gratitude towards them. This attitude leads to peace of mind and general happiness as they know Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their righteous deed and will reward them for it. This is the way all muslims must act otherwise they may well be left empty handed on the Day of Judgment.

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from...their right...”***

The right side or hand is normally attributed to performing good deeds. So in this respect this verse could mean that the Devil will aim to prevent someone from performing good deeds or he will aim to destroy the reward of a person's good deeds.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the bankrupt muslim is the one who accumulates many righteous deeds, such as fasting and prayer, but as they mistreated people their good deeds will be given to their victims and if necessary their victim's sins will be given to them on Judgement Day. This will lead to them being hurled into Hell.

It is important to understand that a muslim must fulfil two aspects of faith in order to achieve success. The first are the duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer. The second aspect is in respect to people which includes treating them kindly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true believer until they keep they physical and verbal harm away from the life and possessions of others.

It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, is infinitely forgiving meaning, He will forgive those who sincerely repent to Him. But He will

not forgive the sins which involve other people until the victim forgives first. As people are not so forgiving a muslim should be fearful that those who they have wronged will exact revenge on them by taking away their precious good deeds on Judgment Day. Even if a muslim fulfils the rights of Allah, the Exalted, they may still end up in Hell simply because they have wronged others. It is therefore important for muslims to strive to fulfil both aspects of their duties in order to obtain success in both worlds.

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from...their right...”***

The right side or hand is normally attributed to performing good deeds. So in this respect this verse could mean that the Devil will aim to prevent someone from performing good deeds or he will aim to destroy the reward of a person's good deeds.

It is important for muslims to not only perform righteous deeds but to safeguard them as well. A person can easily lose the reward of their good deeds by adopting certain evil characteristics or by performing sins. This is an extremely deadly trap of the Devil. He patiently waits for decades just to ruin the reward of a muslim. This verse 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. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 160:

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

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from...their right...”***

The right side or hand is normally attributed to performing good deeds. So in this respect this verse could mean that the Devil will aim to prevent someone from performing good deeds or he will aim to destroy the reward of a person's good deeds.

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

the wealthy person as Allah, the Exalted, will judge them on what they do and He will not judge them according to what other muslims do.

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

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from...their right...”***

The right side or hand is normally attributed to performing good deeds. So in this respect this verse could mean that the Devil will aim to prevent someone from performing good deeds or he will aim to destroy the reward of a person's good deeds.

The Devil tries to convince muslims to always observe those who are worse than them in behaviour in order to justify their lack of striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and improving their character and behaviour for the better. For example, a muslim who offers their obligatory prayers once in a while will observe someone who does not pray at all in order to make themselves feel better. A thief will look at a murderer and convince themselves stealing is not so bad. The examples are endless. It is very strange how these muslims so easily observe those who appear worse than them in order to justify their lack of effort in obeying Allah, the Exalted, but these same people will not observe those who are in a worse off position than them when they face difficulties. For example, the person who suffers from back pain will not observe the one who is physically disabled so that it prevents them from complaining. This attitude has specifically been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513.

In addition, if observing those who appear worse in their behaviour does not save one from punishment in a worldly court, such as a thief being pardoned by a judge because there are many murderers in the world,

how can one imagine this excuse will hold up in the court of Allah, the Exalted?

Muslims should therefore avoid this trap of the Devil by observing those who appear better than them so that they are inspired to improve their character and behaviour progressively for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This is what Allah, the Exalted, demands meaning, He does not demand perfection.



***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from...their left...”***

The left side or hand is normally attributed to performing sins. So in this respect this verse could mean that the Devil will aim to encourage a person to commit sins; he will prevent them from sincerely repenting from their sins and even belittle the significance of sins. In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4251, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people commit sins but the best person who commits sins is the one who sincerely repents.

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

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

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

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from...their left...”***

The left side or hand is normally attributed to performing sins. So in this respect this verse could mean that the Devil will aim to encourage a person to commit sins; he will prevent them from sincerely repenting from their sins and even belittle the significance of sins.

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a muslim is in danger of dying as a non-muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

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

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from...their left...”***

The left side or hand is normally attributed to performing sins. So in this respect this verse could mean that the Devil will aim to encourage a person to commit sins; he will prevent them from sincerely repenting from their sins and even belittle the significance of sins.

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3294, advises that whichever path the second rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, took the Devil would take a different path, meaning, out of fear of him. One of the reasons why the Devil acted in this way was because he had little influence over Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him. The Devil cannot physically force someone to commit sins. He instead encourages them to do so through whisperings. But in order for them to be effective he requires a person to possess some sort of worldly desire. Then through his whisperings he encourages the growth of this worldly desire until it drives the person to act on it thereby committing a sin. The reason the Devil had little effect on Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, was because he had removed worldly desires from his heart. His only desires were connected to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, if muslims desire to minimise the effect the Devil has on them they should remove unnecessary desires from their heart. This only occurs when one refrains from indulging in the excess and unnecessary aspects of this material world. The more they do this the more these worldly desires will leave their heart until they reach a point where they only desire to please Allah, the Exalted, in all their actions. The Devil will flee from this person as he knows he will have little effect on them. But the more one indulges in the unnecessary aspects of this material world the more worldly desires they will possess and therefore, the more influence the Devil will have over them.

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from...their left...”***

The left side or hand is normally attributed to performing sins. So in this respect this verse could mean that the Devil will aim to encourage a person to commit sins; he will prevent them from sincerely repenting from their sins and even belittle the significance of sins.

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

*“Woe to every backbiter, slanderer.”*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from...their left...”***

The left side or hand is normally attributed to performing sins. So in this respect this verse could mean that the Devil will aim to encourage a person to commit sins; he will prevent them from sincerely repenting from their sins and even belittle the significance of sins. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2447, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that oppression will become a darkness on the Day of Judgment.

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

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



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

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

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

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from...their left...”***

The left side or hand is normally attributed to performing sins. So in this respect this verse could mean that the Devil will aim to encourage a person to commit sins; he will prevent them from sincerely repenting from their sins and even belittle the significance of sins. It can be argued that ignorance is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

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

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

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is

connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

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

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

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from before them and from behind them and on their right and on their left, and You will not find most of them grateful [to You].”***

It is important to understand that no matter how much religious knowledge one obtains or how much worship and righteous deeds they perform they will never be safe from the attacks and traps of the Devil. This is because the Devil attacks each person according to how much knowledge they possess and how much righteous deeds they perform. For example, he will try to convince the muslim who is strict in offering their obligatory prayers not to offer them in congregation at the Mosque or by convincing them to delay their obligatory prayers beyond their starting times as he knows he will not be able to convince them to completely abandon the obligatory prayers. Whereas, in respect to the muslim who is struggling to establish their obligatory prayers he will attempt to convince them that they are too difficult to establish therefore they should only offer them when they are completely free. He tries to convince those who perform many voluntary righteous deeds not to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to improve their character so that they continue to destroy their good deeds through bad characteristics such as, lying and backing.

The Devil aims to prevent a person from reaching a higher level if he cannot convince them to fall in rank through disobedience to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, muslims should always be on guard against his attacks and traps by persistently striving to increase in rank, improve their character and avoid acts of disobedience which is all achieved by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“...I [Satan] will surely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from before them and from behind them and on their right and on their left, and You will not find most of them grateful [to You].”***

These verses indicate that the ultimate aim of the Devil is to take people off the straight path which consists of following and obeying the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But his ultimate weapon in achieving this evil goal is to convince people to become ungrateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Therefore, 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.

***“[Allāh] said, "Depart from it [i.e., Paradise], reproached and expelled. Whoever follows you among them...””***

This verse indicates that the one who follows the footsteps of the Devil by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, will find nothing but disgrace in both worlds.

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For

example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.



***“[Allāh] said, "Depart from it [i.e., Paradise], reproached and expelled. Whoever follows you among them..."”***

This verse indicates that the one who follows the footsteps of the Devil by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, will find nothing but disgrace in both worlds.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

***“[Allāh] said, "Depart from it [i.e., Paradise], reproached and expelled. Whoever follows you among them...””***

This verse indicates that the one who follows the footsteps of the Devil by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, will find nothing but disgrace in both worlds.

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

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

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have

to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

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

***“[Allāh] said, "Depart from it [i.e., Paradise], reproached and expelled. Whoever follows you among them...””***

This verse indicates that the one who follows the footsteps of the Devil by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, will find nothing but disgrace in both worlds.

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

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

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

***"[Allāh] said, "Depart from it [i.e., Paradise], reproached and expelled. Whoever follows you among them - I will surely fill Hell with you, all together."***

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

All muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly warns that a muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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

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



***“[Allāh] said, "Depart from it [i.e., Paradise], reproached and expelled. Whoever follows you among them - I will surely fill Hell with you, all together."***

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

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

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

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

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

***“[Allāh] said, "Depart from it [i.e., Paradise], reproached and expelled. Whoever follows you among them - I will surely fill Hell with you, all together.”***

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

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

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

***“[Allāh] said, "Depart from it [i.e., Paradise], reproached and expelled. Whoever follows you among them - I will surely fill Hell with you, all together.”***

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield

of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

## Chapter 7 - Al A'raf, Verses 19-25

وَيَتَادَمُ أَسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

١٩

فَوَسَّوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْءِ تَيْهَمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَتَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

﴿٢١﴾ وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ

فَدَلَّهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءَاتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلَّ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ أَهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ وَمِنْهَا تُخْرَجُونَ

"And "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat from wherever you will but do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers."

But Satan whispered to them to make apparent to them that which was concealed from them of their private parts. He said, "Your Lord did not

*forbid you this tree except that you become angels or become of the immortal."*

*And he swore [by Allah] to them, "Indeed, I am to you from among the sincere advisors."*

*So he made them fall, through deception. And when they tasted of the tree, their private parts became apparent to them, and they began to fasten together over themselves from the leaves of Paradise. And their Lord called to them, "Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you that Satan is to you a clear enemy?"*

*They said, "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers."*

*Allah] said, "Descend, being to one another enemies. And for you on the earth is a place of settlement and enjoyment [i.e., provision] for a time."*

*He said, "Therein you will live, and therein you will die, and from it you will be brought forth.""*



***“And "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise...””***

If muslims desire a blissful marriage in this world and end up with their spouse in Paradise they must choose a spouse based on the teachings of Islam. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person is married for four reasons: their wealth, lineage, beauty or for their piety. He concluded by warning that a person should marry for the sake of piety otherwise they will be a loser.

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

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

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

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

***“And "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise...””***

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a Muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a Muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All Muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a Muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

***“And "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise...””***

This reminds mankind of their original home namely, Paradise. A Muslim must strive hard in this material world so that they can return to their original home. This is only possible through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves 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. A Muslim must never allow themselves to become distracted from striving to return to their original and eternal home by the temporary material world.

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

It is strange how Muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short

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

***“And "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat from wherever you will but do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.””***

It is important to understand that the prohibitions and commands of Allah, the Exalted, do not exist to make people's life harder. They only exist in order to benefit people in both this world and in the next even if these benefits are not apparent to people. For example, the negative effects of alcohol, which science has proven, was not always apparent such as its negative effect on the organs of the body. It only became unlawful in Islam to protect people from this and other harms. In addition, It is an aspect of faith to accept something without understanding its wisdoms. If all the wisdoms of the commands and prohibitions were made apparent then it would not allow Muslims to possess complete faith. Allah, the Exalted, does not benefit from these commands and prohibitions only people do.

***“And "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat from wherever you will but do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.””***

It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, did not directly command them not to eat from the tree He instead warned them not to even approach it. This reminds Muslims to avoid doubtful and unlawful things as much as possible.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful.

Piety can be summed up to mean fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes treating others how one desires to be treated by people.

An aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things take 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 and only uses lawful things will protect their religion and honor.



If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, it 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 meaning, speech which derives no benefit nor is it a sin, often leads to evil speech such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoided the first step by not indulging in vain speech they would avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to adopt piety as described earlier, a branch of which is to avoid vain and doubtful things out of fear they will lead to the unlawful.

***“And "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat from wherever you will but do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.””***

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

***“And "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat from wherever you will but do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.””***

This verse also reminds Muslims that Allah, the Exalted, did not create mankind in order to burden them with difficulties. In fact, He created them in order to grant them countless blessings in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

*“...Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship...”*

But in order to acknowledge His Lordship and one's servanthood a Muslim must adhere to the rules of Islam meaning, fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Without this there is no difference between mankind and animals. So this in fact, indicates the great status granted to mankind by Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, it is important to understand the greatest wisdom behind the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, is to protect a person from harming themselves and others just like the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, was commanded not to eat from a specific tree as the consequences would harm him not Allah, the Exalted. Only the things which are harmful to people have been prohibited by Allah, the Exalted, whether they recognize these harms or not is irreverent. Truly understanding this through knowledge will aid a Muslim in refraining from the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, with a positive mind-set

instead of observing them as a great burden. This positive thinking will increase one's ease in obeying Allah, the Exalted. All the things which are either of no harm or benefit a person have been made lawful. So a Muslim is free to enjoy these things as long as they do not distract them from their duties which in itself is harmful and therefore prohibited. When one understands this important fact they will realise that Islam is truly an easy and simple religion. This in fact is the most loved aspect of religion to Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287.

***“...lest you be among the wrongdoers.”***

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

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

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

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

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

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

***“But Satan whispered to them to make apparent to them that which was concealed from them of their private parts. He said, "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you become angels or become of the immortal."...So he made them fall, through deception...And their Lord called to them, "Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you that Satan is to you a clear enemy?"”***

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3294, advises that whichever path the second rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, took the Devil would take a different path, meaning, out of fear of him. One of the reasons why the Devil acted in this way was because he had little influence over Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him. The Devil cannot physically force someone to commit sins. He instead encourages them to do so through whisperings. But in order for them to be effective he requires a person to possess some sort of worldly desire. Then through his whisperings he encourages the growth of this worldly desire until it drives the person to act on it thereby committing a sin. The reason the Devil had little effect on Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, was because he had removed worldly desires from his heart. His only desires were connected to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, if muslims desire to minimise the effect the Devil has on them they should remove unnecessary desires from their heart. This only occurs when one refrains from indulging in the excess and unnecessary aspects of this material world. The more they do this the more these worldly desires will leave their heart until they reach a point where they only desire to please Allah, the Exalted, in all their actions. The Devil will flee from this person as he knows he will have little effect on them. But the more one indulges in the unnecessary aspects of this material world the more worldly desires they will possess and therefore, the more influence the Devil will have over them.

***“But Satan whispered to them to make apparent to them that which was concealed from them of their private parts. He said, "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you become angels or become of the immortal."...So he made them fall, through deception...And their Lord called to them, "Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you that Satan is to you a clear enemy?"”***

These verses are connected to chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 38:

*“...And Satan had made pleasing to them their deeds and averted them from the path...”*

As mentioned in this verse the Devil fools people into committing sins and making wrong decisions by beautifying the incorrect choice for them. This occurs in situations when a person must make a choice between two or more options. It also occurs when the choice is between the lawful and unlawful and even between two lawful options. If the Devil cannot guide someone to a sin then he attempts to guide them to the inferior option, even if it is lawful, hoping it will lead to some sort of a sin, such as a person complaining about life and destiny. The Devil beautifies a choice by causing one to focus on its apparent benefit to such a degree that they lose focus on the bigger picture and the consequences of the choice. An adult then behaves like a child who makes choices without reflecting over the consequences of their actions. This is one of the main reasons why people commit sins. In reality, if one truly reflected on the punishment of sins they would never commit them.



Something which helps in situations like this is to mentally take a step back and assess the options by comparing their long-term benefits and harms. Only when the lawful benefits of something outweighs the harm should a person proceed. The other thing which helps is to deeply reflect on the consequences of the potential options. Some choices might be lawful but if one goes ahead with them it may make their life difficult in the long run. For example, sometimes people rush into marriage with someone they apparently love. They base their decision solely on their feelings instead of reflecting on other more important aspects, for example, if their potential future spouse will make a good life partner or a good parent and if they will help them in their obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Many marriages have ended in divorce because the couple did not reflect on the long term implications of a potential marriage. Many people often claim their spouse was very different before they got married but in most cases they have not changed at all. The truth is that before marriage they did not spend so much time with them so they did not observe certain characteristics which became obvious after marriage.

Some often rush into action and later have regrets as their choice caused them more trouble and in many cases the issue was not a big deal in the first place. This type of action can only be avoided when one reflects on the situation and observes the bigger picture meaning, the wider and long-term implications and consequences of taking a step forward.

One should not only assess if something is lawful or unlawful before making a decision. Even though, this is the most important thing to consider yet, it is not the only thing. As many lawful incorrect choices, which are beautified by the Devil, can lead to trouble further on in life.

To sum up, before making any choice a person must take a step back and reflect deeply over its lawfulness and its potential long-term benefits and harms under the guidance of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever acts like this will rarely make a wrong choice they later regret.

***“But Satan whispered to them to make apparent to them that which was concealed from them of their private parts. He said, "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you become angels or become of the immortal."...So he made them fall, through deception...And their Lord called to them, "Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you that Satan is to you a clear enemy?"”***

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

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

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

Even though, a muslim should not delay in performing righteous deeds yet, they should still think things through before performing them. This is because a righteous deed may receive no reward simply because its

conditions and etiquettes have not been fulfilled because of one's hastiness. In this respect, one should only move forward in any matter after they have thought things through.

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

***“But Satan whispered to them...And he swore [by Allāh] to them,  
“Indeed, I am to you from among the sincere advisors.””***

These verses indicate that Muslims should only consult a few people in respect to their affairs. They should select these few people according to the advice of the Holy Quran. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 43:

*“...So ask the people of the message if you do not know.”*

This verse reminds muslims to consult those who possess knowledge. As consulting an ignorant person only leads to further trouble. Just like a person would be foolish to consult a car mechanic over their physical health a muslim should only consult those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

In addition, a muslim should only consult those who fear Allah, the Exalted. This is because they will never advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, those who do not fear or obey Allah, the Exalted, might possess knowledge and experience but they will easily advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, which only increases one's problems. In reality, those who fear Allah, the Exalted, possess true knowledge and only this knowledge will guide others through their problems successfully. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

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

***“But Satan whispered to them...And he swore [by Allāh] to them, "Indeed, I am to you from among the sincere advisors." So he made them fall, through deception...”***

Muslims must avoid following in the footsteps of the Devil by showing sincerity to others.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



***“But Satan whispered to them...And he swore [by Allāh] to them, "Indeed, I am to you from among the sincere advisors." So he made them fall, through deception...”***

There are countless examples in the world of how a person inspired their friend to take the wrong path in life which caused them serious trouble, such as prison. One should not only be cautious of people who possess bad characteristics as they will influence their friends in a negative way which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. But a muslim should also be cautious over the people who seem to possess genuine love for them especially those who do not possess real knowledge. This is because the one who does not possess real knowledge will sometimes advise their loved ones incorrectly believing they have fulfilled and shown their love to their companion. For example, a wife may advise her tired husband to offer his obligatory prayer at home instead of at the Mosque with congregation. Even though according to some scholars it is permissible to offer one's obligatory prayer at home yet, this advice will only take one away from one of the greatest traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn will only take them further away from Allah, the Exalted. This wife may believe she has behaved in a loving way even though she has not. This is why gaining useful knowledge is extremely important and a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. This is because some things may seem difficult outwardly yet many blessings are contained within them. And many things may seem easy and even lawful yet they only take one away from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a muslim should be cautious and remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and not get fooled by the advice a loved one gives. They should not assume the advice will benefit them just because it comes from a beloved companion.

***“So he made them fall, through deception...And their Lord called to them, "Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you that Satan is to you a clear enemy?"”***

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1964, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between a believer and an evil person.

A true believer can be considered naive in respect to people as they always interpret their words and actions in a positive way instead of always thinking bad about others. They do not judge others and instead treat people how they desire others to treat them. Loving for others what one loves for themselves is in fact the sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. They prove this through their actions by supporting others according to their means such as, financial and emotional support.

This Hadith describes a believer as noble as they act with good character in both public and in private. Meaning, they show good character in respect to Allah, the Exalted, by having a sincere intention and practically fulfill His commands, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They also fulfill the other aspect of faith which is to show good character to people by treating them according to the teachings of Islam, which includes fulfilling the rights of others, such as their dependents.

On the other hand an evil person behaves opposite to these characteristics. Specifically, they are deceitful and treacherous in respect to the rights they owe Allah, the Exalted, and people. They demand their rights in full but fail to fulfill the rights of others. They strive to fulfill their desires by any means necessary including unlawful means and do not care who they wrong in the process.

It is important for muslims not to only rely on their declaration of faith but also strive to adopt the noble characteristics discussed in Islam.

***“So he made them fall, through deception...And their Lord called to them, "Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you that Satan is to you a clear enemy?"”***

The Devil tries to convince muslims to always observe those who are worse than them in behaviour in order to justify their lack of striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and improving their character and behaviour for the better. For example, a muslim who offers their obligatory prayers once in a while will observe someone who does not pray at all in order to make themselves feel better. A thief will look at a murderer and convince themselves stealing is not so bad. The examples are endless. It is very strange how these muslims so easily observe those who appear worse than them in order to justify their lack of effort in obeying Allah, the Exalted, but these same people will not observe those who are in a worse off position than them when they face difficulties. For example, the person who suffers from back pain will not observe the one who is physically disabled so that it prevents them from complaining. This attitude has specifically been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513.

In addition, if observing those who appear worse in their behaviour does not save one from punishment in a worldly court, such as a thief being pardoned by a judge because there are many murderers in the world, how can one imagine this excuse will hold up in the court of Allah, the Exalted?

Muslims should therefore avoid this trap of the Devil by observing those who appear better than them so that they are inspired to improve their

character and behaviour progressively for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This is what Allah, the Exalted, demands meaning, He does not demand perfection.

***“So he made them fall, through deception...And their Lord called to them, "Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you that Satan is to you a clear enemy?"”***

It is important to understand that no matter how much religious knowledge one obtains or how much worship and righteous deeds they perform they will never be safe from the attacks and traps of the Devil. This is because the Devil attacks each person according to how much knowledge they possess and how much righteous deeds they perform. For example, he will try to convince the muslim who is strict in offering their obligatory prayers not to offer them in congregation at the Mosque or by convincing them to delay their obligatory prayers beyond their starting times as he knows he will not be able to convince them to completely abandon the obligatory prayers. Whereas, in respect to the muslim who is struggling to establish their obligatory prayers he will attempt to convince them that they are too difficult to establish therefore they should only offer them when they are completely free. He tries to convince those who perform many voluntary righteous deeds not to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to improve their character so that they continue to destroy their good deeds through bad characteristics such as, lying and backing.

The Devil aims to prevent a person from a reaching a higher level if he cannot convince them to fall in rank through disobedience to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, muslims should always be on guard against his attacks and traps by persistently striving to increase in rank, improve their character and avoid acts of disobedience which is all achieved by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

***“...And when they tasted of the tree, their private parts became apparent to them, and they began to fasten together over themselves from the leaves of Paradise...”***

They behaved in this manner out of modesty. But it is important to note that modesty goes beyond one's clothes.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2458, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that showing true modesty to Allah, the Exalted, involves guarding the head and what it contains and to protect the stomach and what it contains and to remember death often. He concluded by declaring that whoever intends to seek the hereafter should leave the adornments of the material world.

This Hadith proves that modesty is something which extends beyond one's clothing. It is something which encompasses every aspect of one's life. Protecting the head includes guarding the tongue, eyes, ears and even the thoughts from sins and vain things. Even though, one may hide what they say and what they see from others but they cannot hide these things from Allah, the Exalted. So protecting these parts of the body is a sign of true modesty.

Guarding the stomach means one should avoid unlawful wealth and food. This will lead to the rejection of one's good deeds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

Finally, modesty includes giving priority to the hereafter over the excess of this material world. It is important to note, this includes taking from the material world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excess or extravagance as these are disliked by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 7 Al Araf, verse 31:

*“...and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.”*

The one who behaves in this manner according to the teachings of Islam will find that they adequately prepare for the hereafter and have plenty of time to enjoy the lawful pleasures of the world moderately.



***“...And when they tasted of the tree, their private parts became apparent to them, and they began to fasten together over themselves from the leaves of Paradise...They said, "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers." ...”***

These verses indicate the act of sincere repentance, which involves an inward state coupled with actions.

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

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

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

minor sins committed in between them as long as major sins are avoided.

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

***“...And when they tasted of the tree, their private parts became apparent to them, and they began to fasten together over themselves from the leaves of Paradise...They said, "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers." ...”***

These verses indicate the act of sincere repentance, which involves an inward state coupled with actions.

A divine Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3540, advises the importance and vastness of the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. The first part of the Hadith declares that as long as a muslim sincerely supplicates to Allah, the Exalted, and hope's in His mercy they will be forgiven by Him.

This response has in fact been guaranteed for all lawful supplications in the Holy Quran not just for the supplication of forgiveness. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

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

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned this verse and declared that supplication is an act of worship meaning, a righteous deed. This has been advised in a Hadith found in

Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1479. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604, advises that every supplication is accepted in different ways as long as it is a lawful one. The person is either granted what they requested or a reward will be reserved for them in the hereafter or they will be forgiven an equivalent sin. But it is important to note, that in order to receive a positive response a muslim must fulfil the conditions and the etiquettes of the supplication.

One of the greatest supplications a muslim can make is for forgiveness as it is a means for one obtaining blessings, avoiding difficulties in this world and a means to obtaining Paradise and escaping Hell in the next world. Chapter 71 Nuh, verses 10-12:

*“And said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in [continuing] showers. And give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers.’”*

As indicated by the main Hadith under discussion having hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, when supplicating is a condition for forgiveness. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, acts according to His servant's opinion of Him, which has been confirmed in a divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

One of the greatest causes of forgiveness is when a muslim only hopes in Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them full well knowing no one can forgive them or protect them from punishment except Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that no matter how many sins a person commits the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is greater. In fact, it is unlimited therefore a person's limited sins will never be able to overcome it. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to magnify what they supplicate for as nothing is too great for Allah, the Exalted, to grant. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6812.

The next part of the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of sincerely seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, which has been mentioned in many verses and other Hadiths. This act of seeking forgiveness is a part of sincere repentance. It can be understood that seeking forgiveness is an act of the tongue while the rest of sincere repentance involves turning away from the sin through actions. It also includes feeling genuine remorse, making a firm promise not to commit the sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. It is important to note, that not persisting on the same sin is a condition for the repentance to be accepted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 135:

*“And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know.”*

It is extremely important for a muslim to be persistent in seeking forgiveness as this leads to deliverance from every worry, a way out from every difficulty and support from places where one would not expect. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1518.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the greatest cause of forgiveness namely, not associating anything to Allah, the Exalted. There are two types of associating things with Allah, the Exalted: major polytheism and minor polytheism. The major type is when one worships things other than Allah, the Exalted, or in addition to Him. The minor version is when one acts for the sake of anyone except Allah, the Exalted, such as showing off. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. In fact, the one who acts for the sake of people will be told by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day to seek their reward from those they acted for, which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. The one who acts in this way will find that they will eventually be exposed in this world and no matter how well they treat others they will never gain their real love or respect because of their bad intention. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6705.

When one realises the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, they only think, act and speak for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, out of fear and love for Him. This behaviour minimises the chances of committing sins and whatever sins do occur will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. It is the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3797, that the statement there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, removes all wrong actions.

This is the behaviour all muslims must strive to adopt. The foundation of it is fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

***“...And their Lord called to them, "Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you that Satan is to you a clear enemy?"...[Allāh] said, "Descend, being to one another enemies..."”***

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

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



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

***“[Allāh] said, "Descend, being to one another enemies..."”***

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

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

Finally, as a person will end up with those they love in the hereafter according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, a Muslim must practically show they love for the righteous by accompanying them

in this world. But if they accompany bad or heedless people then it proves and indicates they love for them and their ultimate destination in the hereafter. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

***“...And for you on the earth is a place of settlement...for a time. He said, “Therein you will live, and therein you will die...””***

It is important for Muslims to understand from these verses that even though Earth is a settlement for them yet, it is only a temporary one and therefore they should treat it so. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2377, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he was not concerned over the excess of this material world and his example in this world is of a rider who takes a short rest under the shade of a tree and then moves on leaving it behind.

In reality, each person is a traveller who stays in this world for a very limited time compared to where they came from meaning, the world of the souls and to where they are heading, which is the eternal hereafter. In fact, this world in comparison to the other stages is like waiting at a bus stop. In this Hadith this world has been described like a shadow. This is because a shadow does not last long and fades away without people even taking notice, which is exactly how a person's days and nights pass away. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not mention a traveller's inn or a hotel as these are solid structures which indicate permanence. A fading shadow better describes this material world. This is because no matter how old a person is they always admit that their life flashed by and felt like a moment. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

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

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated a rider and not someone walking as the one who is walking would rest more under the shade of a tree than a rider. This further indicates the limited time people spend in this world.

Taking a rest in the shade indicates the importance of one correctly using the material world in order to obtain the provisions they need just like the rider takes the provision they need namely, rest. A Muslim should therefore, prepare for their immediate departure from this world by preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

This does not mean one should abandon this world as in reality, the Hadith clearly indicates one should make use of the material world in order to prepare for the hereafter. The rider takes a rest and Muslims must gather the things which will benefit them in the hereafter. Instead of dedicating their time to things which will leave them empty handed on Judgment Day.

***“...And for you on the earth is a place of settlement...for a time. He said, “Therein you will live, and therein you will die...””***

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

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

***“...And for you on the earth is a place of settlement...for a time. He said, "Therein you will live, and therein you will die..."”***

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

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

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

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

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



***“...And for you on the earth is a place of settlement...for a time. He said, "Therein you will live, and therein you will die..."”***

These verses remind muslims that their time on Earth is limited and it is not without purpose. Muslims must strive to prepare for their journey to the hereafter by using the blessings they have been granted correctly before their death arrives.

It is important to understand that the very purpose of everything which was created by Allah, the Exalted, was for it to be used correctly according to the teachings of Islam. When something is not used correctly it in reality becomes useless. For example, wealth is useful in both worlds when it is used correctly such as being spent on the necessities of a person and their dependents. But it can become useless and even a curse for its bearer if it is not used correctly, such as being hoarded or spent on sinful things. Simply hoarding wealth causes wealth to lose value. How can paper and metal coins one tucks away be useful? In this respect, there is no difference between a blank piece of paper and a note of money. It is only useful when it is used correctly.

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

***“...And for you on the earth is a place of settlement...for a time. He said, “Therein you will live, and therein you will die...””***

These verses remind muslims that their time on Earth is limited and it is not without purpose. Muslims must strive to prepare for their journey to the hereafter by using the blessings they have been granted correctly before their death arrives. One can adopt this correct attitude when they understand the purpose of these blessings.

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

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

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

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

***“...And for you on the earth is a place of...livelihood [i.e., provision] for a time.”***

This verse also reminds Muslims that their provision meaning, the elements needed to survive in this world, have been apportioned and guaranteed to them. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, advises that Allah, the Exalted, allocated all things, such as provision, to all creatures over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth. It is important to understand that there are two aspects in respect to all situations, such as gaining one's provision. The first aspect is what Allah, the Exalted, has decided meaning, destiny; this will occur and nothing in creation can prevent this from occurring. As this is out of a person's hands it makes no sense to stress over this aspect as they have no influence on destiny irrespective of what they or anybody else does. The second aspect is one's own efforts. This aspect a person has full control over and they should therefore concentrate on this aspect by using the means they have been provided, such as their physical strength, to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to gain lawful provision in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents.

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

***“He said, “Therein you will live, and therein you will die...””***

This verse also indicates the time one will spend in their grave.

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

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

Therefore, muslims must act today and not delay in this preparation as the time of death is unknown and often comes suddenly. Delaying to a tomorrow one may not see is foolish and it only leads to regrets. The same way a person spends much energy and time beautifying their home in this world they must strive harder in beautifying their grave as the journey there is inevitable and the stay there long. And if one suffers

in their grave then what follows will only be worse. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4267.

***“He said, “Therein you will live, and therein you will die, and from it you will be brought forth.””***

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

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

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

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

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



***“He said, “Therein you will live, and therein you will die, and from it you will be brought forth.””***

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

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

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

## **Hadith 1**

During the Heavenly Journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, observed a man seated with two groups on his right and left side. When the man looked at the group on his right side he laughed but when he looked at the group on his left side he wept. The Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, commented that the man was the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and the two groups were the souls of his descendants. The group on his right side were the inmates of Paradise, which made him happy and the group on his left side were the inmates of Hell, which made him weep. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 415.

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

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

## Hadith 2

During the Heavenly Journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, met a man. The Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, told the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to greet the man who was his father, the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, greeted him with the Islamic greeting of peace and the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, returned his greeting. The Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, addressed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as his son and added that he was a good son. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7517.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Hadith 3**

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3326, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that after creating the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, Allah, the Exalted, told him to greet a group of Angels with the Islamic greeting of peace adding that this was going to be his greeting and the greeting of his offspring to one another. When he greeted the Angels with the Islamic greeting of peace by saying “peace be upon you” they replied and added to his greeting by saying “peace and Allah’s mercy be upon you.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 12, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised a good quality found within Islam. Namely, to spread the Islamic greeting of peace to people one knows and to those they do not know.

It is important to act on this good characteristic as nowadays Muslims often only spread the Islamic greeting of peace to those they know. It is important to spread it to all as this leads to love between people and strengthens Islam. In fact, this characteristic leads to Paradise according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 194.

A Muslim should never forget that they will receive a minimum of ten rewards for every greeting of peace they extend to others even if others fail to reply to them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5195.

Finally, a Muslim should fulfill the Islamic greeting of peace correctly by demonstrating this peace in their other speech and actions towards others by keeping their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others. This is in fact, the definition of a true Muslim and believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

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