

Monasticism

in

Islam

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Achieve Noble Character

Monasticism in Islam

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All praises are for Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds, who has given us the inspiration, opportunity and strength to complete this volume. Blessings and peace be upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad whose path has been chosen by Allah, the Exalted, for the salvation of mankind.

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

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

Compiler's Notes

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

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

Introduction

The following short book discusses some aspects of Monasticism in Islam. This discussion is based on Chapter 57 Al Hadid, Verses 26-27 of the Holy Quran:

“And We have already sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their descendants prophethood and scripture; and among them is he who is guided, but many of them are defiantly disobedient. Then We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel. And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allah. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

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.

Monasticism in Islam

Chapter 57 - Al Hadid, Verses 26-27

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا النُّبُوَّةَ
وَالْكِتَابَ فَمِنْهُمْ مُهْتَدٍ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ



ثُمَّ قَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم بِرُسُلِنَا وَقَفَّيْنَا بِعِيسَى ابْنِ
مَرْيَمَ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنجِيلَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ
اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَرَهَابَنِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا
عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا
فَعَاتَيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ



*“And We have already sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their
descendants prophethood and scripture; and among them is he who is
guided, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.*

Then We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel. And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allah. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

“And We have already sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their descendants prophethood and scripture; and among them is he who is guided, but many of them are defiantly disobedient. Then We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel...”

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and divine scriptures is for them to be sincerely obeyed and followed. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“And We have already sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their descendants prophethood and scripture; and among them is he who is guided, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

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

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

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

“And We have already sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their descendants prophethood and scripture; and among them is he who is guided, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

“And We have already sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their descendants prophethood and scripture; and among them is he who is guided, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“And We have already sent Noah and Abraham...Then We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel. And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy...”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that Allah, the Exalted, will not show mercy to the one who does not show mercy to others.

Islam is a very simple religion. One of its fundamental teachings is so simple that even uneducated people can understand and act on them namely, how people treat others is how they will be treated by Allah, the Exalted. For example, those who learn to overlook and forgive the mistakes of others will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

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

Those who support others in beneficial worldly and religious matters such as emotional or financial aid will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud,

number 4893. This same Hadith advises that the one who conceals the faults of others will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, if one treats others with kindness and respect according to the teachings of Islam they will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted. And those who mistreat others will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted, even if they fulfill the obligatory duties which are connected to Him such as the obligatory prayers. This is because a muslim must fulfill both duties in order to achieve success namely, the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Finally, it is important to note a muslim will only be treated kindly by Allah, the Exalted, if they treat others kindly for His sake. If they do it for any other reason than they will undoubtedly forfeit the reward mentioned in these teachings. The foundation of all acts and Islam itself is one's intention. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

“And We have already sent Noah and Abraham...Then We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel. And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy...”

Throughout the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, muslims have been advised to be merciful to others. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, advises that those who show mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, that showing mercy is not only through one's actions, such as donating wealth to the poor. It in fact encompasses every aspect of one's life and interaction with others, such as one's words. This is why Allah, the Exalted, warns those who show mercy to others by donating charity that failing to show mercy through their speech, such as counting their favours done to others, only cancels their reward. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

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

True mercy is shown in everything: one's facial expression, one's glance and the tone of their speech. This was the full mercy shown by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is therefore how muslims must act.

In addition, showing mercy is so important that Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear in the Holy Quran that even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possessed countless beautiful and noble characteristics yet, the one which attracted the hearts of people towards him and Islam was mercy. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

It clearly warns that without mercy people would have fled from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If this was the case in respect to him even though he possessed countless other beautiful characteristics how can muslims, who do not possess such noble characteristics, expect to have a positive impact on others, such as their children, without showing true mercy?

Simply put, muslims should treat others how they wish to be treated by Allah, the Exalted, and others, which is undoubtedly with true and full mercy.

“...We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel...and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allāh. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

Even though some of them adopted monasticism in order to please Allah, the Exalted, it would have been better if they adhered to the guidance that was given to them.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that any matter which is not based on Islam will be rejected.

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

they have preoccupied muslims from learning and acting on these two sources of guidance as they feel satisfied with their behaviour. This leads to ignorance of the two sources of guidance which in turn will only lead to misguidance.

This is why a muslim must learn and act on these two sources of guidance which have been established by the leaders of guidance and only then act on other voluntary righteous deeds if they have the time and energy to do so. But if they choose ignorance and made up practices even if they are not sins over learning and acting on these two sources of guidance they will not achieve success.

“...We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel...and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allāh. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

Even though some of them adopted monasticism in order to please Allah, the Exalted, it would have been better if they adhered to the guidance that was given to them.

Muslims should not follow and adopt the customary practices of non-muslims. The more muslims do this the less they will follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is quite evident in this day and age as many muslims have adopted the cultural practices of other nations which has caused them to become distant from the teachings of Islam. For example, one only needs to observe the modern muslim wedding to observe how many non-muslim cultural practices have been adopted by muslims. What makes this worse is that many muslims cannot differentiate between Islamic practices based on the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the cultural practices of non-muslims. Because of this non-muslims cannot differentiate between them either which has caused great problems for Islam. For example, honour killings is a cultural practice which has nothing to do with Islam yet because of the ignorance of muslims and their habit of adopting non-muslim cultural practices Islam is blamed every time an honour killing occurs in society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, removed the social barriers in the form of casts and brotherhoods in order to unite people yet ignorant muslims have resurrected them by adopting the cultural practices of non-muslims. Simply put, the more cultural practices muslims adopt the less they will act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

“...We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel...and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allāh. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

They failed to fulfil the rights of monasticism correctly as they turned this into a physical practice by disconnecting from their responsibilities and the physical world. Whereas, the truth lies in spiritually detaching from the material world instead of a physical detachment.

The material world which one should detach from actually refers to one's desires. It does not refer to the physical world, such as the mountains. This is indicated by chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 14:

“Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return [i.e., Paradise].”

These things are connected to the desires of people and by them one becomes distracted from preparing for the hereafter. When one abstains from their desires they are in fact detaching from the material world. This is why a muslim who does not possess worldly things can still be regarded a worldly person because of their inner desire and love for it.

Whereas, a muslim who possesses worldly things, like some of the righteous predecessors, can be considered detached from the material world as they do not desire and occupy their minds, hearts and actions with them. Instead they desire lies in the eternal hereafter.

The righteous predecessors understood why Allah, the Exalted, created them and what He desired from them. So they only spent wealth according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and never spent on things according to their own desires. These righteous people were certain that their souls and possessions belonged only to Allah, the Exalted. So they reached the highest level of gratitude by using each worldly blessing according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. These people may have been given plenty of worldly things but they did not put their trust in them. They only put their trust in Allah, the Exalted. They took no pleasure in their belongings and only saw them as a duty which needed to be discharged according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Their hearts were not attached to their belongings nor did they exclude others from enjoying the worldly blessings they possessed by greedily hoarding them. This is why they possessed worldly things but the things did not possess them. They had wealth but chose poverty for themselves as they spent to fulfil the needs of others. They took delight only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by using their worldly possessions according to His wish instead of their own. Neither did they grieve or show displeasure when they lost worldly things as they preferred the choice of Allah, the Exalted, over all things. They took no pleasure or joy in their worldly possessions. So in reality, they had abstained from the material world even though they possessed worldly things. The possessions were in their hands not in their hearts. They understood that the true love of Allah, the Exalted, consisted of turning away from this material world with their hearts and intentions. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 131:

“And do not extend your eyes toward that by which We have given enjoyment to [some] categories of them, [its being but] the splendor of worldly life by which We test them. And the provision of your Lord is better and more enduring.”

“...We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel...and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allāh. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

They failed to fulfil the rights of monasticism correctly as they turned this into a physical practice by disconnecting from their responsibilities and the physical world. Whereas, the truth lies in spiritually detaching from the material world instead of a physical detachment. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, instead of in ways pleasing to themselves and others. The one who behaves in this manner is detached from the material world even if they possess all of it.

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

difference between a blank piece of paper and a note of money. It is only useful when it is used correctly.

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

“...We sent following their footsteps [i.e., traditions] Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel...and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allāh. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

They failed to fulfil the rights of monasticism correctly as they turned this into a physical practice by disconnecting from their responsibilities and the physical world. Whereas, the truth lies in spiritually detaching from the material world instead of a physical detachment. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, instead of in ways pleasing to themselves and others. The one who behaves in this manner is detached from the material world even if they possess all of it. One can adopt the correct attitude when they understand the purpose of these blessings.

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

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

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

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

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

***“...So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward,
but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”***

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

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

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

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

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

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

“They [i.e., their leaders] will say, “Rather, you [yourselves] were not believers.””

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in

Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

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