

Obtaining Happiness

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Achieve Noble Character

Obtaining Happiness

ShaykhPod Books

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Acknowledgements

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 Obtaining Happiness. This discussion is based on Chapter 53 An Najm, Verse 43 of the Holy Quran:

“And that it is He [Allah, the Exalted] who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

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.

Obtaining Happiness

Chapter 53 – An Najm, Verse 43

وَإِنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْحَكَ وَأَبْكَى

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh...”

Muslims often increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, such as attending the Mosques for the congregational prayers or reciting more spiritual exercises in times of difficulty. But in times of ease they often relax and become lazy. But it is important to note, that generally it is more important to be more on guard and increase one's obedience during times of ease than times of difficulty. This is because one often sins more during times of ease than difficulty, such as abandoning their obligatory duties. If one reviews the different misguided people in history, such as Pharaoh and Quroon they will observe that their sins only multiplied during times of ease. Someone who is facing a difficulty where they are stuck and have no option but to patiently wait for relief is less likely to sin as they desire to be relieved of their difficulty. Whereas, a person experiencing times of ease will be in a better position to enjoy and over indulge in worldly things which often leads to sins. For example, a person facing poverty is less likely to sin as many sins require wealth. Whereas, a wealthy person is in an easier position to commit those sins, such as purchasing alcohol or drugs. Therefore, muslims should take note of this and ensure they maintain or even increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, during times of ease so that they do not fall into sins and disobedience.

In addition, the one who is obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands and refraining from His prohibitions during times of ease will gain the support of Allah, the Exalted, during their times of difficulty which will aid them to overcome them successfully. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”

“And that it is He who makes [one]...weep.”

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

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

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

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

A patient muslim understands that anything which effected them, such as a difficulty, could not have been avoided even if the entire creation aided them. Similarly, whatever missed them could not have affected them. The one who truly accepts this fact will not exult and grow proud over anything

they obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, allocated that thing to them. Nor will they grieve over anything which they fail to obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, did not allocate that thing to them and nothing in existence can alter this fact. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

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

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

The one who is content does not desire things to change as they know the choice of Allah, the Exalted, is better than their choice. This muslim firmly believes and acts on the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. It advises that every situation is best for the believer. If they encounter a

problem they should show patience which leads to blessings. And if they experience times of ease they should show gratitude which also leads to blessings.

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

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

A muslim will never reach full contentment until their behaviour is equal in times of difficulty and ease. How can a true servant go to the Master namely, Allah, the Exalted, for a judgment and then become unhappy if the choice does not match their desire. There is a real possibility that if a person gets what they desire it will destroy them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

A muslim should not worship Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, when the divine decree matches their wishes they praise Allah, the Exalted. And when it does not they become annoyed acting as if they know better than Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

A muslim should behave with the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as if they would behave with a skilled trustworthy doctor. The same way a muslim would not complain taking bitter medicine prescribed by the doctor knowing it is best for them they should accept the difficulties they face in the world knowing it is best for them. In fact, a sensible person would thank the doctor for the bitter medicine and similarly an intelligent muslim would thank Allah, the Exalted, for any situation they encounter.

In addition, a muslim should review the many verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the reward given to the patient and content muslim.

Deep reflection on this will inspire a muslim to remain steadfast when facing difficulties. For example, Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Another example is mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2402. It advises that when those who patiently faced trials and difficulties in the world receive their reward on Judgment Day those who did not face such trials will wish they patiently faced difficulties such as their skin being cut off with scissors.

In order to gain patience and even contentment with what Allah, the Exalted, chooses for a person they should seek and act on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they reach the high level of excellence of faith. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. Excellence in faith is when a muslim performs deeds, such as the prayer, as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will not feel the pain of difficulties and trials as they will completely be immersed in the awareness and love of Allah, the Exalted. This is similar to the state of the women who did not feel pain when cutting their own hands when they observed the beauty of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 31:

“...and gave each one of them a knife and said [to Joseph], “Come out before them.” And when they saw him, they greatly admired him and cut their hands and said, “Perfect is Allah! This is not a man; this is none but a noble angel.””

If a muslim cannot reach this high level of faith they should at least try to reach the lower level mentioned in the Hadith quoted earlier. This is the level where one is constantly aware they are being observed by Allah, the Exalted. The same way a person would not complain in front of an authoritative figure they feared, such as an employer, a muslim who is constantly aware of the presence of Allah, the Exalted, will not complain about the choices He makes.

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

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

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

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

turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

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

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what

they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

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

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

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less

worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

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

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually

disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come

together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every situation is blessed for a believer. The only condition is that they need to respond to each situation they encounter while obeying Allah, the Exalted, specifically, patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease.

There are two aspects of life. One aspect are the situations people find themselves in whether they are times of ease or difficulties. The control of what situation a person faces is out of their hands. Allah, the Exalted, has decided this and there is no escaping them. Therefore, stressing over the situations one faces does not make sense as they are destined and therefore inevitable. The other aspect is a person's reaction to each situation. This is in each person's control and this is what they are judged on for example, showing patience or impatience in a difficult situation. Therefore, a muslim must concentrate on their behaviour and reaction in each situation instead of stressing over being in a situation as this is unavoidable. If a muslim desires to succeed in both worlds they should assess each situation and always act in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. For example, in times of ease they must use the blessings they possess as prescribed by Islam which is true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

And in times of difficulty they must show patience knowing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind the choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As Allah, the Exalted, controls the emotions of a person they must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times so that He protects them from negative emotions and grants them positive ones.

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who contracts and expands. It can mean that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who contracts the life and provision of someone through tests and trials. And He is the only One who can expand these things through divine blessings and relief from difficulties. In each case, Allah, the Exalted, provides His servants with what is best for them. For example, the faith of some will only remain strong if their lives are contracted for if they reached a time of expansion they would step out of bounds which would lead them to Hell. Conversely, the faith of some will only remain strong if they experience expansion in life as difficulties can cause their faith to be shaken which causes impatience and can lead them to Hell. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Therefore, the muslim who understands this divine name will be grateful for whatever situation they are experiencing knowing it is best for them and in each case they will adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. During times of contraction they will remain patient and in times of expansion they will remain grateful. According to a Hadith found in Sahih

Muslim, number 7500, the one who behaves in this manner will always obtain blessings in all situations.

One should act on this divine name by contracting away from all the things which displease Allah, the Exalted, and expand their efforts towards the things which please Allah, the Exalted. They should contract their own lives by minimising indulging in the excess of this material world and expand the lives of others by striving to benefit them according to their means.

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