

Practicing

Islam

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Achieve Noble Character

Practicing Islam

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Practicing Islam

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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 the importance of Practicing Islam. This discussion is based on Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, Verses 208-209 of the Holy Quran:

“O you who have believed, enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.”

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.

Practicing Islam

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 208-209

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَدْخُلُوا فِي السَّلَامِ كَافَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطَوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ

إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٠٨﴾

فَإِنْ زَلَلْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْكُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٩﴾

“O you who have believed, enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.”

“O you who have believed...”

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.

“O you who have believed...”

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.

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan...But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

From this a Muslim should understand the importance of not cherry picking the duties and commands of Islam according to their wishes and desires. The Devil did not reject the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, He instead rejected a specific command which did not appeal to his desires. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

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

Whoever behaves in this manner is not following the truth, they are only following and worshipping the Devil and their own desires. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

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

A Muslim is not expected to achieve perfection but they must strive to learn and fulfill all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation so that

they avoid following in the footsteps of the Devil. In addition, it has been made clear that fulfilling the duties of Islam is undoubtedly within their capacity of people. Therefore, one is left with no excuses except to prove their faith in Islam through sincere actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

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

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan...But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

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.

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan...But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

It is said that these verses were revealed about some Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who were formerly from the people of the book. They desired to act on the teachings of Islam and on those teachings from their previous religion which did not contradict the teachings of Islam. Allah, the Exalted, warned them not to behave in this manner as there is no right guidance except Islam. This has been discussed in Tafsir Al Qurtubi, Volume 1, Page 531.

The aim of the Devil is to prevent Muslims from acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he knows salvation for them lies in this. Muslims should therefore adhere to these two sources of guidance above all else.

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.

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan...But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

The aim of the Devil is to prevent Muslims from acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he knows salvation for them lies in this. Muslims should therefore adhere to these two sources of guidance above all else.

Therefore, 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.

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan...But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

Muslims must remember 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 being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many Muslims today believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A Muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A Muslim should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

In addition, this important position should remind Muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah,

the Exalted, become angry with the Muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

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.

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

An aspect of this is when the Devil convinces a person that Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them for their persistent disobedience as He is All Merciful. Even though, Allah, the Exalted, is All Merciful yet true hope in Him is always tied to His obedience. So this person wrongfully believes they have hope in Allah, the Exalted, whereas they only possess wishful thinking.

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.

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

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.

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

Entering into Islam completely means to support one’s internal faith with outward actions.

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.

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

The clear proofs are the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, a Muslim will only enter Islam completely after they sincerely follow and obey them.

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.

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

The clear proofs of Islam will only benefit the one who strives to gain and act 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.

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

These verses remove the false belief which the Devil uses to misguide people namely, ignorance is bliss.

It is important to understand that the famous statement ignorance is bliss is not true especially, in respect to religious affairs and the hereafter. Unfortunately, some Muslims believe just because they do not know an Islamic rule they are exempt from obeying it and Allah, the Exalted, will not hold them accountable for it. This is one of the worse types of ignorance as Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that there are no excuses and Muslims must learn and act on the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared this to be a duty on all Muslims in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. It is a trap of the Devil to believe ignorance is an acceptable excuse and one does not need to gain knowledge about Islam. If a government does not accept this excuse how can one expect Allah, the Exalted, to? Just like a person who takes on a responsibility is expected to know the rules attached to it, such as being a licensed driver, the one who accepts Islam as their religion is responsible for learning the rules linked to it. Therefore, Muslims must avoid ignorance as it will not benefit them in this world and it will certainly not aid them in the hereafter.

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

These verses encourage one to learn and act on Islamic teachings so that they obtain certainty of faith as this is how one enters Islam completely and avoids the path of the Devil.

All Muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all Muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a Muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some Muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-Muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the Muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

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

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. 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...”

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

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

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

It is commonly observed that in the special days and nights of the Islamic year, such as the night of power, which is considered to be on the 27th night of the Islamic month of Ramadan according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1386, Muslims come out in droves and inhabit the Mosques or pray more at home. Even though, this is a good thing it is important to understand that a Muslim should not only behave in this manner on the special days and nights of the Islamic year. They should instead respect each day and night throughout the whole year by fulfilling their duties in them without neglect. They should never believe the worship of one day or night in the year will make up for their neglect of the rest of year as this is completely untrue and a trick of the Devil. Being a Muslim is a 24/7 duty it is not a duty which extends only on certain days and nights. Meaning, a Muslim must fulfil their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions, face destiny with patience and fulfil the rights of people every day of their life according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Cherry picking certain days and nights is a major reason why Muslims feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, as they only turn to Him occasionally. The truth is simple, what Muslims dedicate to Allah, the Exalted, is what they will receive in return. If they only dedicate a few days or nights in the year to Him then they should not expect a great return. Islam does not demand one to pray all night instead it demands Muslims to fulfil their obligatory duties and as much of the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as possible. This does not take much time up and leaves one with plenty of time to do other things as well.

In reality, the one who does not respect every day and night by fulfilling their duties in them will find that even the special days and nights are just ordinary days and nights for them. But the one who respects every day and night will find that every day and night is like the special days and nights, like the night of power, for them. Meaning, Allah, the Exalted, will bless them just like He blesses them on the special days and nights in the Islamic year.

“...enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

The word used to mean Islam in these verses can also be translated to mean peace. Therefore, it can mean enter into peace completely. This indicates that if one desires peace in both worlds they must accept and act on Islamic teachings.

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 know that Allāh is Exalted in Might...”

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who over powers all things, who in reality is the only One who possesses power and might. Anyone else who possesses strength only does so because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. There is no atom in this world or in the next that can escape the power and authority of Allah, the Exalted.

As all power belongs to Allah, the Exalted, a Muslim should therefore always remember that the strength to perform righteous deeds and refrain from sins comes from Allah, the Exalted, alone. This will remove any chance of pride creeping into their heart. An atom's worth of which is enough to take a person to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Whoever desires for their faith to become mighty must obey the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be granted strong faith which will aid them to overcome all difficulties so that they leave this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. True obedience only lies in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. 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.”

Truly Knowing Allah, the Exalted, is All Mighty should prevent a Muslim from sinning. As they should know there is no way to escape the might of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, when a Muslim engraves this divine name into their heart it prevents them from committing oppression and wronging others. They become fully aware that even if there is no person powerful enough to seek justice from them Allah, the Exalted, will certainly take them to account and punish them in both worlds. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, oppression to others may cause the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted, to hurl them into Hell on Judgment Day.

“...Allāh is...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.

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