

The Two Paths

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Achieve Noble Character

The Two Paths

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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 the Two Paths one must choose from in this world. This discussion is based on Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, Verses 256-257 of the Holy Quran:

“There shall be no compulsion in the religion. The right course has become distinct from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in ṭāghūt [false objects of worship] and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing. Allah is the Ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darknesses into the light. And those who disbelieve - their allies are ṭāghūt [false objects of worship]. They take them out of the light into darknesses. Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein.”

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.

The Two Paths

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 256-257

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ

فَقَدْ آسَمَّسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥٦﴾

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاءُ هُمُ

الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا

خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٥٧﴾

“There shall be no compulsion in the religion. The right course has become distinct from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in ṭāghūt [false objects of worship] and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.

Allah is the Ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darknesses into the light. And those who disbelieve - their allies are ṭāghūt [false objects of worship]. They take them out of the light into darknesses. Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein.”

“There shall be no compulsion in the [acceptance of] religion...”

Islam is something which must be accepted by a person's heart not just through their words and actions. As the affair of a person's heart is hidden forcing them to accept Islam becomes a pointless endeavor. This clearly refutes those who claim Islam spread by the sword.

In addition, this verse also indicates that as the proofs of the truthfulness of Islam are crystal clear, for those who desire to find and accept the truth, compulsion is therefore not needed. Therefore, Muslims should strive to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they obtain certainty of faith and avoid blind imitation of others.

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...”

“There shall be no compulsion in the [acceptance of] religion...”

Islam is something which must be accepted by a person's heart not just through their words and actions. As the affair of a person's heart is hidden forcing them to accept Islam becomes a pointless endeavor. This clearly refutes those who claim Islam spread by the sword.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever avoids arguing even if they are right will be given a house in the middle of Paradise.

It is important to understand that the characteristic of a true Muslim is not to argue or debate in order to promote themselves and their opinion. They should instead present the information in order to promote the truth. This applies to both worldly and religious matters. The one who aims to promote the truth will not argue. Only the one who is trying to promote themselves will. Contrary to what many believe winning arguments does not increase one's rank in anyway. The only time one's rank in both worlds' increases is when they avoid arguing and instead present the truth or accept it when it is presented to them. A Muslim should avoid going back and forth with others when discussing things as this is a characteristic of arguing. It is this correct mentality which has been indicated in Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 125:

“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best...”

A Muslim should understand that their duty is not to force people to accept something. Their duty is to simply present the truth as being forceful is a characteristic of arguing.

A Muslim should not waste their time nor stress if others disagree with their opinion. When one holds onto these disagreements over time it can cause enmity to build up between them and others, which can lead to fractured and broken relationships. This can even lead to the sin of severing ties with people. So in cases like this it is important for Muslims to let things go and not harbour negative feelings towards someone who disagrees with their opinion and choice. They should instead push themselves to agree to disagree and move on from the situation without any ill feelings. The one who fails to do this will find themselves always arguing and possessing enmity for others as they are bound to disagree with others on certain topics and issues due to the difference in their characteristics and mentality. Understanding this principle is a branch of finding peace in this world.

“There shall be no compulsion in the [acceptance of] religion...”

Some scholars believe that this verse was abrogated by other verses connected to fighting. But this belief creates confusion in respect to the teachings of Islam. The better position is that it has not been abrogated and there are numerous reasons why this is the case.

As mentioned earlier, Islam is something which must be accepted by a person’s heart not just through their words and actions. As the affair of a person’s heart is hidden forcing them to accept Islam becomes a pointless endeavor. This clearly refutes those who claim Islam spread by the sword. Allah, the Exalted, has repeatedly condemned and harshly criticized those who accept Islam with their tongues but reject it in their hearts meaning, hypocrites. This would be the outcome of the one who is forced to accept Islam. Allah, the Exalted, would never be satisfied with this code of conduct as open disbelief is preferred over hypocrisy. This is obvious as the lowest level in Hell has been reserved for the hypocrites. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 145:

“Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire...”

In addition, the Holy Quran makes it clear that the people of the book (Jews and Christians) living in an Islamic state can live in peace and with full rights even if they do not accept Islam by paying a tax. If Muslims were

allowed to force others to accept Islam there is no need to prescribe this tax. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 29:

“Fight against those who do not believe in Allāh or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allāh and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture - [fight] until they give the jizyah [tax]...”

These and many other proofs indicate that this verse has not been abrogated.

“...The right course has become distinct from the wrong...”

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.

“...The right course has become distinct from the wrong...He [Allah SWT] brings them out from darkneses into the light...”

Allah, the Exalted, achieves this through the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, if one desires to adopt the single right course and escape the numerous dark paths of misguidance then they must sincerely obey and follow these two sources of guidance.

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

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

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.

“...The right course has become distinct from the wrong...”

Allah, the Exalted, achieves this through the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, if one desires to adopt the single right course and escape the numerous dark paths of misguidance then they must sincerely obey and follow these two sources of guidance.

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.

“...The right course has become distinct from the wrong...”

It is important to note that the right course is a path which must be practically journeyed down if one desires to achieve success in both worlds.

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.

“...So whoever disbelieves in ṭāghūt [false objects of worship] and believes in Allāh has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it...Allāh is the Ally of those who believe...”

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.

“...So whoever disbelieves in ṭāghūt [false objects of worship] and believes in Allāh has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it...Allāh is the Ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darkneses into the light...”

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.

“...So whoever disbelieves in ṭāghūt [false objects of worship] and believes in Allāh has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it...Allāh is the Ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darkneses into the light...”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. 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.”

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themselves or others they should know neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

“...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness...”

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

“...So whoever disbelieves in ṭāghūt [false objects of worship] and believes in Allāh has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it...And those who disbelieve - their allies are ṭāghūt. They take them out of the light into darknesses...”

In reality, anything which distracts a Muslim from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, becomes a false object of worship.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2886, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, criticized the slaves of wealth and fine clothing. These people are pleased when they receive these things and become displeased when they do not.

In reality, this applies to all non-essential worldly things. This criticism is not directed at those who strive in the material world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted. But it is directed at those who either pursue the unlawful in order to obtain wealth and other worldly things in order to satisfy their desires and the desires of others. And it is directed at those who pursue non-essential lawful things in such a way that it causes them to neglect obeying Allah, the Exalted, correctly. This obedience involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This prevents them from preparing adequately for the hereafter and their final judgment.

In addition, this criticism is for those who are impatient when they do not obtain their unnecessary desires in this world. This attitude can cause a Muslim to obey Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, they obey Him when they obtain their desires but when they do not they angrily turn away from His obedience. The Holy Quran has warned of a severe loss in both worlds for the one who adopts this attitude. 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.”

Muslims should instead learn to be patient and content with what they possess as this is true richness according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2420. In reality, the person full of desires is needy meaning, poor even if they possess much wealth. A Muslim should know Allah, the Exalted, grants people what is best for them and not according to their desires as this in most cases would lead to their destruction. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Aware and Seeing.”

“...So whoever disbelieves in ṭāghūt [false objects of worship] and believes in Allāh has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it...And those who disbelieve - their allies are ṭāghūt. They take them out of the light into darkneses...”

In reality, anything which distracts a Muslim from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, becomes a false object of worship. Two common examples of this are the extreme love for wealth and a high social status.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a Muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a Muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never

change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In

fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true Muslim.

If a Muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated Muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This Muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

“...So whoever disbelieves in ṭāghūt [the Devil] and believes in Allāh has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it...And those who disbelieve - their allies are ṭāghūt. They take them out of the light into darkneses...”

Taghut has also been interpreted to mean the Devil. This has been mentioned in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 2, Page 31. In this respect 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.

“...So whoever disbelieves in ṭāghūt [the Devil] and believes in Allāh has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it...And those who disbelieve - their allies are ṭāghūt. They take them out of the light into darknesses...”

Taghut has also been interpreted to mean the Devil. This has been mentioned in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 2, Page 31. 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.

“...So whoever disbelieves in ṭāghūt [the Devil] and believes in Allāh has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it...And those who disbelieve - their allies are ṭāghūt. They take them out of the light into darkneses...”

Taghut has also been interpreted to mean every leader of misguidance. This has been mentioned in Tafsir Al Qurtubi, Volume 1, Page 661. In this respect, one should carefully choose who their guide and role model is.

If one turns the pages of history they will observe many people who achieved great worldly success and in some cases benefited mankind yet, they will also observe at least one thing which taints their achievements. But if one observes the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will observe nothing except success and countless things which benefit mankind. Even though, there are people who falsely criticise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is quite evident from his highly accurate and detailed biography which has been verified by reliable Muslim and non-Muslim historians that this criticism is based on nothing but falsehood. This is why Muslims must put aside all role models and instead study and adopt the flawless character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is the only way to achieve real untainted success in both one's worldly and religious life. 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...”

There is no goal greater than this in this world. In fact, this is what people irrespective of their faith strive to achieve. And Allah, the Exalted, has placed all of it in the footsteps of his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”

It is simple, if a person desires worldly and religious success they should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they choose a path other than his whatever tainted success they achieve will eventually become a burden for them and it may lead to a punishment on a Great Day.

“...So whoever disbelieves in ṭāghūt [false objects of worship] and believes in Allāh has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it...And those who disbelieve - their allies are ṭāghūt. They take them out of the light into darknesses...”

These verses indicate that simply possessing the light of faith through verbal declaration is not enough to succeed. One must support this declaration through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. The last part of the quoted verses under discussion make it clear that disobeying Allah, the Exalted, causes one to leave the light of faith and obedience and enter the many paths of misguidance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“...So whoever disbelieves in ṭāghūt [false objects of worship] and believes in Allāh has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allāh is Hearing and Knowing...And those who disbelieve - their allies are ṭāghūt. They take them out of the light into darknesses...”

A person might be able to fool people by pretending to show sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, but as He is All Hearing and knows their hidden intention they are in reality only fooling themselves.

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

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

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

“Allāh is the Ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darkneses into the light...”

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

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

Exalted, through his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has not only pointed out where true good lies but He has also placed this good at one's finger tips. Allah, the Exalted, has informed mankind of where an eternal buried treasure is located which can solve all the problems they may encounter in both worlds. But Muslims will only obtain this good once they struggle to acquire and act on it.

“Allāh is the Ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darkneses into the light...”

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds He blesses their five senses so that they use them in obedience to Him. This righteous servant will very rarely commit sins. This increase in guidance has been indicated in Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

This Muslim reaches the level of excellence which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when a Muslim performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will guard their mind and body from sins. This is the one who when they speak they speak for Allah, the Exalted, when they are silent they are silent for Allah, the Exalted. When they act they act for Him and when they are still they are for His sake. This is an aspect of monotheism and understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

“...And Allāh is Hearing...”

Nothing irrespective of its size and location is out of the reach of the divine sight and hearing of Allah, the Exalted.

The Muslim who understands this divine name will be extremely cautious in their actions and speech. The same way one becomes vigilant over their actions when they are in the hearing and seeing range of someone they respect or fear a true Muslim will be vigilant over their behaviour knowing no word or action escapes Allah, the Exalted. In fact, acting in this way is the high level of faith which has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. If one remains steadfast on this behaviour then they will eventually reach excellence of faith whereby they perform acts, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted, constantly watching their inner and outer being. This attitude will prevent sins and encourage one to sincerely perform righteous deeds.

In addition, this divine name encourages Muslims never to give up hope whenever they face a difficulty thereby believing no one is aware or even cares about them. Allah, the Exalted, undoubtedly hears and sees their distress and will respond at the time which is best for His servant. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

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

A Muslim should act on this divine name by using these two senses in the way commanded by Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, one should not observe unlawful and vain things nor should they listen to unlawful and vain things. They should instead use them in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to avoid vain things as they are often the first step to the unlawful. This is achieved by acting on the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502. It advises that when one fulfils the commands of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to the obligatory duties and then strives in voluntary righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, He empowers their senses such as their sight and hearing so that they only use them in accordance to His desire and pleasure.

“...Allāh is...Knowing.”

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

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

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

“Allāh is the Ally of those who believe...”

Allah, the Exalted, safeguards and preserves the creation and takes care of them with special care. He protects the obedient from the plots and traps of the Devil and He safeguards the disobedient from His immediate punishment in order to give them an opportunity to sincerely repent.

A Muslim should act on this divine name by using the means provided to them by Allah, the Exalted, but always trust in His divine care and choices in every situation and outcome they face even if they do not observe the wisdom behind some choices. This inspires patience and even contentment with the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

“...And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him...”

A Muslim should also understand that they will only be protected from misguidance and punishment by the Guardian namely, Allah, the Exalted. This removes any signs of pride and ensures they seek His protection through sincere obedience to Him. A Muslim must act on this divine name by safeguarding every trust they possess such as their blessings by using them according to the teachings of Islam. They should safeguard their actions and speech from the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This will

ensure they receive more blessings from 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]...”

“Allāh is the Ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darkneses into the light...”

This verse is connected to chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

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

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfil the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A Muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's day. A Muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a Muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the

more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

“Allāh is the Ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darkneses into the light. And those who disbelieve - their allies are ṭāghūt [false objects of worship]. They take them out of the light into darkneses...”

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

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

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally,

this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

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

“...And those who disbelieve - their allies are ṭāghūt [false objects of worship]. They take them out of the light into darkneses. Those are the companions of the Fire...”

In reality, anything which distracts a Muslim from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, becomes a false object of worship. Adopting this mindset will only lead to failure in both worlds.

It is important for Muslims to understand that whenever they face any type of worldly failure or regrets they should remind themselves of the regrets in the hereafter some people will have, such as the one mentioned in chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

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

In this world one's regret will always be followed by another chance or other options which they can pursue in order to gain success once again. But the regret and failure of the hereafter is something which cannot be rectified meaning, there are no second chances in the next world. No one will have the opportunity to return to Earth in order to act differently.

Therefore, every Muslim should be more concerned with the failures they may encounter in the hereafter over the failures and regrets of this world. This does not mean one should not strive to achieve lawful success in this world. It means they should always prioritise gaining success in the hereafter over gaining success in this world. This is an important mentality Muslims should adopt before they reach a day where reflecting on their failures and regrets will not help them in the slightest. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”

“...And those who disbelieve - their allies are ṭāghūt [false objects of worship]. They take them out of the light into darkneses. Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein.”

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

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

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

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

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