

A Balanced

Life

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Achieve Noble Character

A Balanced Life

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Acknowledgements

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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 book will discuss an important aspect of Noble Character namely, a Balanced Life.

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.

A Balanced Life

Islam is a religion of balance which extends to every aspect of one's life. The following verse of the Holy Quran delivers a very powerful and stern message to all muslims. They must never break or alter the rules set out by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 87:

“O you who have believed, do not prohibit the good things which Allah has made lawful to you and do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”

It is connected to a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5063. This discusses the actions of a few Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. These Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, desired to determine how much the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed and fasted. After learning this information they resolved to worship more in order to compensate their mistakes. According to the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 7299 and 1130, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did fast continuously for days on end and performed extensive prayers but these actions were not performed consistently. One of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, decided to fast every day. Another decided to pray throughout the night. Another resolved to abstain from marriage. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, heard of this he summoned these Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and reminded them that he was the messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, and Allah, the Exalted, had chosen his lifestyle for people to follow. He added that his

life was balanced and needed to be followed. 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.”

There is nothing wrong with praying and fasting extra as all good deeds should be done in abundance. But pushing oneself beyond the limits advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is discouraged as nothing is superior than following his traditions.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had a balanced spiritual, work, social and personal life. Each of these aspects have responsibilities and duties set out by Allah, the Exalted, which must be fulfilled. A worshipper must always remember the advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Muslim, number 1834. He advised that a small act of worship which is done regularly is much better than a single large act done once in a while. The former attitude creates a balanced life whereby, a muslim worships regularly and makes time for their other duties. Whereas, the latter mentality will cause a muslim to neglect their other responsibilities.

Once a Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, decided to fast and worship excessively. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, learned of this he advised him not to burden himself so much. But as the Companion, may Allah be pleased with him,

was young and full of energy he insisted that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, permit him to fulfill his desire. Ultimately, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave in to his request. Years later the same Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, admitted that his excessive worship took its toll on his body. He often wished that he took the advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to approach worship in a balanced way.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, always stressed to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, not to worship beyond their strength as he once advised that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, only turns away from a worshipper when they become defocused and fed up. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4238. Undoubtedly, Allah, the Exalted, has blessed certain muslims with strength that exceeds the limits of normal people but this is quite rare.

If one is extreme and prays excessively they will undoubtedly neglect their other responsibilities. If someone is too care free they will rarely pray such as those who only pray the Friday congregational prayers. These people foolishly misinterpret a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 910, which advises that whoever performs two Friday congregational prayers in a row will be forgiven for the sins they committed during the two days. But they fail to recognize this refers to only minor sins and is only achieved after all obligatory actions are fulfilled. These people twist Islam to suit their own desires. They reject the obligatory duties all year round and for one day, such as the Night of Power, which is considered to be the 27th of Ramadan according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1386, perform excess voluntary worship believing this will make up for their missed obligatory

prayers. They behave in such a manner as they have heard that this night is better than a thousand months. Chapter 97 Al Qadr, verse 3:

“The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months.”

But they fail to realize that no amount of voluntary prayers can ever make up for a single obligatory prayer. A balanced approach to offering prayer is when one offers all five obligatory prayers on time fulfilling all their requirements and etiquettes. If possible they should offer it with congregation at the Mosque and regularly perform some voluntary prayers, such as the night prayer.

The Holy Quran clearly advises one should find a balance in their expenditures. When spending is necessary such as, spending on educating one's child, a muslim should spend happily. They must use every ounce of their wealth to please Allah, the Exalted. When one spends like this even the morsel of food they feed their family with will be recorded as charity and thus rewarded. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6373.

Unfortunately, some are heedless and fail to remember that they will be held accountable for even pennies spent in the wrong way. The pious never fear poverty when they spend on righteous causes.

The Devil tempts people into showing off when spending money in order to please others instead of aiming to please Allah, the Exalted, by spending in righteous ways. For example, it has become fashionable to spend excess amounts of wealth on wedding functions. In most cases, these people only desire to outdo others. These people will do whatever it takes to achieve this and fail to understand that everyone's financial situation is different. They contradict logic by observing and competing with others instead of acting according to their own financial situation. Some even take out loans and place their own lives in difficulty in order to complete their foolish aim. They desperately try to impress people instead of enjoying the moment with their loved ones. Unfortunately, on many occasions the marriage does not even last long. But if they acted for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and followed a balanced approach according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then Allah, the Exalted, would have placed great blessings in the function, marriage and wealth.

A beautiful example of striking a balance in life is shown in the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2198. A poor Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, who was physically able to work requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for financial aid. Instead, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sold the Companion's cloak and bowl so that he could purchase an axe. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, put the axe together with his blessed hands and commanded the Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, to gather firewood to sell in the market. Some days later he returned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to thank him and praised Allah, the Exalted, who had made him self-sufficient through his efforts. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, could have given him wealth and advised him to concentrate on worship but as he was able-bodied the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, provided him with resources that made him independent of charity. This is the teaching of

Islam. Islam encourages worship and education so that one can become independent and therefore aid others.

A successful muslim should not only fulfill the rights of their dependents but must also aid the needy in the form of charity. Islam sends a clear message to those who are able to struggle for their lawful provision yet choose to go on benefits and inhabit the Mosques. This contradicts the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2139, that those who struggle for an honest living according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, will be raised with the martyrs on Judgment Day. Normal muslims should not adopt extremism by abandoning seeking their provision while claiming they rely on Allah, the Exalted, to provide directly for them as this contradicts the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Nor should they place their trust completely in their own efforts. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in, Sahih Bukhari, number 6464, that the balance of every situation is best. Giving up seeking provision is only justified for those who fully trust Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from financial benefits and begging.

Once a saint questioned why his companion refrained from struggling for his provision and instead completely relied on Allah, the Exalted. He replied that he once observed a bird with an injured wing in the middle of a jungle. Shortly after another bird flew down and placed food in the beak of the injured bird. After witnessing this he realized that if Allah, the Exalted, can provide sustenance without the injured bird struggling for it then He can also provide provision for him without struggle. But the saint reminded him that a true believer would always choose the superior

path. He added that instead of behaving like the injured bird by being dependent on others why not behave like the strong bird that struggles for itself and provides for others also. This incident is recorded in Imam Ghazzali's, *An Exposition of the Hearts*, page 162.

This shows that a successful muslim should adopt the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by choosing the superior path. They should struggle for their lawful sustenance and perform righteous deeds but place the trust in delivering provision and the acceptance of their deeds to Allah, the Exalted. This attitude is one of the best ways one can show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, for the physical strength He has blessed them with. And true gratitude only leads to further blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

One of the important aspects of Islam is to earn lawful provision. This can be achieved when one struggles to gain worldly knowledge. If a muslim abandons the material world how can they obtain lawful provision in order to sustain themselves and their dependents? This is why Islam stresses the importance of a balanced life.

In a Hadith found in *Sahih Muslim*, number 1896, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that one should only possess lawful envy for two types of people. The first is the one who possesses wealth and utilizes it in ways pleasing to Allah, the

Exalted. The second is the one who acts on their useful knowledge and teaches others it for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. In the first case the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is obviously referring to worldly wealth which cannot be achieved by abandoning the material world. In the second case, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised any type of useful knowledge which aids them to please Allah, the Exalted. This includes worldly knowledge.

Islam teaches that worldly things are not innately evil. In reality, they become blessed or cursed depending on how they are used. If used according to one's own will and desires it can become a curse for its owner. But if used according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, it becomes a blessing in this world and in the next. Therefore, one should adopt the highest level of gratitude and obtain a balanced life by utilizing every blessing in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

The following verse of the Holy Quran advises a balance should always be maintained in business. When one follows the rules of Islam and treats people fairly Allah, the Exalted, places grace and blessings in their honest earnings. This would benefit the person more than obtaining wealth in an unbalanced manner. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 35:

“And give full measure when you measure, and weigh with an even [i.e., honest] balance. That is the best [way] and best in result.”

It is important to note, this verse does not advise one to abandon doing business and only worship Allah, the Exalted. It instead teaches muslims to earn and use lawful wealth in a balanced way.

Every aspect of one's life should be perfectly balanced. For example, the following verse of the Holy Quran even explains that a person should walk in a balanced way. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

“And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily...”

One should not walk with pride as this is the characteristic of the Devil. Nor should they walk with such deep humility that they appear destitute and worthless.

Balance is required in one's attitude also. For example, the balance shown by the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, which is mentioned in the Holy Quran. His awe and sense of presence was very well known yet Allah, the Exalted, ordered him to show softness towards Pharaoh when inviting him towards guidance. This verse teaches one that balance is required in speech as well as actions. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 44:

“And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah].”

The following verse informs mankind that Islam is a balanced religion. A muslim should never be too soft or harsh. If one demonstrates excessive softness others will take advantage of them. If one is too harsh it will cause divisions and enmity within society. Muslims should treat others with respect but not be afraid to advise them to do right and abstain from evil in a respectful way even if this upsets them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

“And thus We have made you a median [i.e., just] community...”

Wealth and family should not encourage one to become arrogant and develop a superiority complex. But neither should a wealthy person behave like a pauper. Maintaining respect for society, avoiding pride and remaining grateful is a balanced approach. If one is poor they should maintain their honor and struggle via lawful means to earn their sustenance and refrain from begging.

Even in worldly things a balanced approach is a must. For example, without water a person would eventually die. Death by drowning can occur when too much water enters the body. The lack of water can cause serious health issues such as dehydration. Similarly, when one consumes too much food it leads to countless health problems and if too less is eaten it can cause other health issues such as malnutrition. Hence why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, taught a balance in religious and non-religious tasks. Specifically, for nourishment he advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi,

number 2380, that a person should split the stomach into three parts. The first part should be filled with food, the second with water and the third should be left empty.

People can be classified into two types. One is engrossed in the material world and is only concerned with it. The other type is concerned with both worlds but prioritizes the permanent hereafter over this temporal world. The latter type is blessed in this world and in the next. Some people mistakenly believe one needs to abandon this world in order to achieve success in the next world. This is untrue as this world is a bridge that all must cross to reach the hereafter. Those that completely abandon this world only desire to live free of responsibilities such as the monks of the past nations. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 27:

“...and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allah...”

The ultimate way of achieving balance is when one earns their sustenance in a lawful manner and shuns all avenues leading to the unlawful. They do business with society according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These muslims always give priority to their obligatory duties such as the prayer and charity. Their aim is to earn enough to fulfill their responsibilities such as, taking care of their family. They then turn to Allah, the Exalted, by acquiring useful knowledge that will aid them in adopting piety. They do not greedily amass and hoard wealth and always avoid the excess luxuries of the material world. They always struggle to discharge their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Because of their attitude Allah, the

Exalted, blesses them in every aspect of their life and thus they find contentment. Greed of the material world does not even enter their minds let alone their hearts. When they perform all this with the sole purpose of pleasing Allah, the Exalted, they are recorded as one who is heedful to the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 37:

"[Are] men whom neither commerce nor sale distracts from the remembrance of Allah and performance of prayer and giving of zakah..."

A muslim should always supplicate for good in this world and in the next. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 201:

"But among them is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""

If completely abandoning the world was the path to true success then the verse would have indicated that one should only ask for good in the next world. Muslims need to avoid the evil parts of the material world and use the good parts to beauty their afterlife. For example, gaining useful knowledge is a vital part of Islam. If one studies to become a doctor and then saves someone's life with the correct intention then they will be rewarded as if they saved the whole human race. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 32:

“Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved mankind entirely...”

Some people have failed to fulfill the duties of Islam simply because they have overburdened themselves. One must fulfill all obligatory duties and fulfill as much of the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as possible in a balanced way. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6464, that after fulfilling the obligatory duties one should worship Allah, the Exalted, moderately. If someone pushes themselves too much they will become exhausted and ultimately give up. This is the reason the same Hadith advises that the best deed is the one which is performed consistently even if it is small in size.

Those who believe living by the rules of Islam is too difficult should assess the fault in their character instead of pointing fingers at Islam. Many Muslims are frightened into believing that if they act according to the teachings of Islam they will become overburdened and thus lead a miserable life. This was the same excuse the non-Muslims of Mecca attempted to use in order to frighten the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. But as proven by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287, Islam is a natural religion which can be implemented in every aspect of one's life and in every generation successfully and easily.

Islam is a simple religion which coincides with a person's mentality and physical structure. For example, the following verse of the Holy Quran explains that Allah, the Exalted, never burdens someone beyond their capacity. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

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

For example, each muslim must offer five obligatory prayers daily. But if they cannot stand to offer it they have permission to sit down. If they cannot sit they have permission to lie down. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1223.

This process is applied to every act and task found within Islam. Humans and the duties of Islam are compatible as they have both been created by Allah, the Exalted. Whoever fails to adhere to Islam should reflect on the weakness of their character instead of criticizing Islam.

The Holy Quran has advised against those activities which provide no benefit in this world and in the next. But all other activities, even if they appear worldly, such as exercise are lawful. For example, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were encouraged to practice horse riding and archery by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3608, as these are a form of exercise and self-defense training. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once

advised in a Hadith found in Imam Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, number 420, that one of best physical activities is swimming which modern science also testifies too. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even gave permission to a Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, to race against another person in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4678, thereby proving such sports are lawful in Islam. According to the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, even they raced each other on two occasions. Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, won the first race and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, won the second. This has been recorded in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2578. Finally, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even took part in a wrestling match when he was challenged by a local wrestler which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, won. This incident has been recorded in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4078.

All the activities which derive a benefit to someone's physical, mental or social state are lawful in Islam as long as the conditions set by Islam are fulfilled. This mentality has been summed up in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 43, where the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he disliked the one who was too strict in their voluntary acts of worship. Unfortunately, some incorrectly claim that Islam is a tough religion. This can occur when uneducated people misinterpret the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. According to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287, Allah, the Exalted, loves a simple religion. This statement can also be observed in the Holy Quran where it clearly declares that Allah, the Exalted, does not desire hardship for mankind. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

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

Islam advises muslims to live in such a way so that this material world and their faith walk hand in hand. Unfortunately, some have twisted this philosophy to suit their own desires. They take part in many pointless things and claim they are living up to this mentality. They fail to recognize that only those things in the material world which provide genuine benefit in this world or in the next fall within this statement. For example, playing sports is a form of exercise which is beneficial for the body. Working to earn lawful provision is useful as one can fulfill their needs through it. Playing with one's children helps to strengthen the bond of love with them. All these are worldly acts which provide some benefit and thus fall under the statement mentioned earlier as long as they are done moderately meaning, in a balanced way. But those acts that provide no benefit in this world or in the next are not included in this statement. One needs to learn from the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to determine the balance they should adopt in this world so that they can gain success in both worlds.

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