

Avoiding Hypocrisy

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Achieve Noble Character

Avoiding Hypocrisy

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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

In order for a muslim to Adopt Noble Character they must be aware and avoid bad character. One type of character which contains many evil traits and has been the subject of many verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is hypocrisy. It is a deep and disastrous spiritual disease which can affect a person in such a subtle way that they may live their entire life without being aware of how much it has taken over their spiritual heart. Therefore, this book will discuss the aspects of hypocrisy so that muslims can avoid them and instead Adopt 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.

Avoiding Hypocrisy

Types of Hypocrisy

There are two types of hypocrisy: major and minor. The major type refers mainly to those who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They outwardly accepted faith while rejecting it with their hearts. Their purpose was to gain the benefits of being a muslim, such as spoils of war and they also desired to destroy Islam from within. They have been promised eternal punishment in the lowest depths of Hell. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 145:

“Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire - and never will you find for them a helper.”

The minor type does not take one out of the fold of Islam but it is none the less a type of character which is far from a successful muslim. Whoever persists on it without sincere repentance may well find themselves facing punishment in both worlds.

Ignorance

Hypocrites are the people who misinterpret the teachings found in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to suit their own desires while claiming to follow the righteous predecessors.

Ignorance is dearer to them than gaining beneficial knowledge. Even if they obtain some knowledge they cherry pick which things to act on and which things to ignore. These people have been described in the Holy Quran as those whose knowledge does not profit them. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

“...and then they failed to live up (act on their knowledge) to it is that of a donkey laden with books...”

Insincerity

Doubts and desires have taken hold of their hearts so they give priority to the temporal world over the permanent hereafter. Their intentions are nothing except to gain the material world even when they perform righteous deeds. They fail to remember the famous Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, which clearly advises that one will be judged according to their intention. They behave like the righteous yet, will find no righteous reward on Judgment Day. They prefer pleasing people over obeying Allah, the Exalted. They fail to understand that when one aims to please Allah, the Exalted, He will protect them from the displeasure of people even if this protection is not obvious. But if a person chooses the obedience of people they will not protect them from the displeasure of Allah, the Exalted.

Two-Faced

A sign of hypocrisy is being two-faced. This is the one who changes their behaviour in order to please different groups of people intending thereby to gain some worldly things. They speak with many different tongues showing their support to different people while harbouring dislike for them. They fail to be sincere towards people which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. If they fail to repent they will find themselves in the hereafter with two tongues of fire. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4873. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 14:

“When they meet the believers, they say: “We believe,” but when they meet their evil companions (in privacy), they say: “Surely we are with you; we were merely jesting.””

Showing Off

Another sign of hypocrisy is showing off to people in order to seek fame and other worldly things. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 142:

“Indeed, the hypocrites [think to] deceive Allah, but He is deceiving them. And when they stand for prayer, they stand lazily, showing [themselves to] the people and not remembering Allah except a little.”

Showing off is such a serious spiritual disease that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, classified it as the minor version of polytheism in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. In fact, the one who does this will not gain any reward from Allah, the Exalted, in this world or in the next. They will be told on Judgment Day to seek their reward from the people they acted for, which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Showing off is so deadly that it will completely ruin a person irrespective of the righteous deeds they have performed. For example, a martyr, scholar and a generous person will be hurled into Hell on Judgement Day because of showing off even though their deeds were extremely righteous. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

Laziness

Another aspect of hypocrisy is being lazy in matters of faith while being eager and responsive in matters of the world. It is often seen how some muslims can easily spend the night earning wealth but if they are requested to dedicate a small portion of the night in voluntary worship such as reciting the Holy Quran they find it burdensome and suddenly become lazy. These same people will happily go out in the middle of the night for the sake of travelling or entertainment yet, their bodies become like immovable mountains when they are advised to attend the local Mosque for the morning obligatory prayer. These people will dedicate hours on end to learning worldly knowledge. which is not prohibited in Islam, yet will not find the energy or time to study a single verse of the Holy Quran or a single Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They will stare at a television for hours enjoying their mindless dramas and films yet, their eyes will suddenly become too heavy to keep open when invited to watch a short religious program. It is strange how muslims desire the constant help and support of Allah, the Exalted, yet they are too lazy to dedicate a small fraction of their day in acts which please Him beyond the obligatory prayers which in total take less than an hour to complete. Muslims must understand that what they give is what they shall receive. If they behave lazily and turn away from those acts which please Allah, the Exalted, then they should not expect much help from Him in their hour of need. No one expects a muslim to dedicate all day to acts of righteousness but a muslim should sincerely reflect on their daily timetable and honestly judge for themselves if they are dedicating as much time as they should do to those actions which please Allah, the Exalted. If a person can make time for earning unnecessary wealth and enjoying other worldly activities they should avoid laziness and make time for Allah, the Exalted.

They are quick in worldly activities but extremely slow in performing righteous deeds. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once described their attitude towards performing the obligatory prayers in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 160. They wait until the last possible moment to offer their obligatory prayer, rush through it without fulfilling its etiquettes, such as pausing in between each position, and only remember Allah, the Exalted, a little before they rush off back to their worldly activities. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 142:

“Indeed, the hypocrites [think to] deceive Allah, but He is deceiving them. And when they stand for prayer, they stand lazily, showing [themselves to] the people and not remembering Allah except a little.”

These people very rarely offer the congregational prayer at the Mosque even though they have no valid excuse. In fact, the only thing preventing them is their extreme laziness towards acts of righteousness. They avoid this righteous deed even though many Hadiths discuss its importance. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 548, that he desired to appoint someone else to lead the prayer and then order for the houses of those men who do not pray with the congregation at the Mosque without a valid reason to be burned down. In fact, one Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 850, advises that the one who did not offer the obligatory prayer with congregation at the Mosque without a valid excuse in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was considered a hypocrite by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as this was their usual habit.

Corruption

Another sign of hypocrisy is that a person spreads corruption in society. This negative characteristic affects all social levels beginning from a family unit and ending at the international level. This type of person dislikes seeing people uniting on good as this may cause the worldly status of others to increase beyond their own. This drives them to backbiting and slander in order to cause people to turn against each other. Their evil attitude destroys their own ties of kinship and when they observe other families who are happy it drives them to destroy their happiness also. They are fault finders who dedicate their time unveiling the mistakes of others in order to drag their social status down. They are the first people to begin gossiping about others and act deaf whenever good things are spoken about. Peace and quiet disturbs them so they seek to create problems in order to entertain themselves. They fail to remember the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546. It advises that whoever covers the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will cover their faults. But whoever seeks out and unveils the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will expose their faults to the people. So in reality, this type of person is only unveiling their own faults to society even though they believe they are exposing the faults of others.

Commanding Evil & Forbidding Good

A part of hypocrisy is that a person not only commits evil deeds themselves and abstains from righteous deeds but they encourage others to do the same. They want others to be in the same boat as them so that they find some comfort in their evil character. They not only drown themselves but take others down with them. Muslims must know that a person will be held accountable for every other person who commits a sin because of their invitation. This person will be treated as if they committed the sin even though they only invited others towards it. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 203. This is why some have said that blessed is the person whose evil dies with them because their sins will increase if others act on their evil advice even though they are no longer alive.

Greed

Another aspect of hypocrisy is greed. Their extreme greed places them far from Allah, the Exalted, far from the people and close to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961. They dislike when others donate charity as their greed becomes manifest to others. As mentioned earlier, they also put people off from donating charity as they dislike society labelling others as generous. So they always try to put people off from donating charity with poor reasons such as labelling charities as con artists. These people should be ignored as Allah, the Exalted, judges people on their intention which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. So even if their donated wealth does not reach the poor as long as a person donates through a trustworthy well known charity they will receive their reward according to their intention. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 67:

“The hypocrite men and hypocrite women are of one another. They enjoin what is wrong and forbid what is right and close their hands...”

Disobedient

Another sign of hypocrisy is that a person dislikes the choices of Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even though they have been commanded to submit to them. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 65:

“But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muhammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.”

They believe their own opinion and thinking is superior to the choice of Allah, the Exalted. This causes them to worship Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, when something good happens they praise Allah, the Exalted. But when something occurs which contradicts their desires they turn away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through impatience. 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.”

One should not cherry pick according to their desires which traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to follow. These are the people who perform the actions they desire and when they are told to act on more important traditions they simply claim that they are not obligatory. This can be considered an aspect of hypocrisy.

All Talk No Action

Another aspect of hypocrisy is when one verbally shows support for others and their good projects such as, building a mosque but when the time comes to take part in the project such as, donating wealth they seem to disappear. Similarly, when people are facing good times they verbally support them reminding others of their loyalty to them. But the moment the people face difficulties these hypocrites offer no emotional or physical support. Instead they criticize them. This was the attitude of the hypocrites in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 62:

"So how [will it be] when disaster strikes them because of what their hands have put forth and then they come to you swearing by Allah, "We intended nothing but good conduct and accommodation.""

Over Confidence

Another sign of hypocrisy is that one will always feel secure and safe from fearing they may be a hypocrite. They always declare to others and fool themselves into believing that they act with the correct intention which is to please Allah, the Exalted. When hypocrisy is mentioned to them they turn away from it believing they have no portion of it in their spiritual hearts thereby claiming purity for themselves. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 32:

“...So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him.”

On the other hand a true believer will always fear that hypocrisy is hidden in their spiritual heart. They constantly judge themselves in order to seek and uproot it from their souls. Even when they perform righteous deeds such as, the prayer or charity they fear it will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, because of some hypocrisy in their intention and action. Chapter 23 Al Mu'minun, verse 60:

“And they who give what they give while their hearts are fearful¹ because they will be returning to their Lord.”

Hypocrites do nothing and feel safe whereas the believers strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions, face destiny with patience and still fear they will fail in the hereafter.

Lying

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that lying is an aspect of hypocrisy. Lying is unacceptable whether it is a small lie which is often called a white lie or when one lies as a joke. All of these types of lying are forbidden. In fact, the one who lies to make people laugh, so their aim is not to deceive someone, has been cursed three times in one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315.

Another popular lie people often speak believing it is not a sin is when they lie to children. This is undoubtedly a sin according to Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4991. It is plain foolishness to lie to children as they will only adopt this sinful habit from the elder who lies to them. Behaving in this manner shows children lying is acceptable when it is not acceptable according to the teachings of Islam. Only in very rare and extreme cases is lying acceptable for example, lying in order to protect the life of an innocent person.

It is vital to avoid lying as according to one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, it leads to other sins such as, backbiting and mocking people. This behaviour leads one to the gates of Hell. When a person continues to lie they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great liar. It does not take a scholar to predict what will happen to a person on Judgment day who has been recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great liar.

All muslims desire the company of the Angels. Yet, when a person lies they are deprived of their company. In fact, the stench that is omitted from the mouth of a liar causes the Angels to move a mile away from them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1972.

Betraying Trusts

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that betraying trusts is an aspect of hypocrisy.

This includes all the trusts one possesses from Allah, the Exalted, and people. Every blessing one possesses has been entrusted to them by Allah, the Exalted. The only way to fulfill these trusts is by using the blessings in the way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they gain further blessings as this is true gratitude. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

The trusts between people are important to fulfill also. The one who has been entrusted with someone else's belongings should not misuse them and only use them according to the wishes of the owner. One of the greatest trusts between people is keeping conversations secret unless there is some obvious benefit in informing others. Unfortunately, this is often overlooked amongst Muslims.

Breaking Promises

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that breaking promises is an aspect of hypocrisy.

The greatest of promises a muslim has made is with Allah, the Exalted, which is to obey Him sincerely. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. All other promises made with people must also be kept unless one has a valid excuse especially, the ones a parent makes with children. Breaking promises only teaches children bad character and encourages them to believe being deceitful is an acceptable characteristic to possess. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2227, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He will be against the one who makes a promise in His name and then breaks it without a valid excuse. How can the one who has Allah, the Exalted, against them on Judgment Day possibly succeed?

Insulting Others

A Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5023, warns that a sign of hypocrisy is insulting others especially, when they disagree with them. When speaking to others a muslim should never use foul and sinful language. It is important to remember that it only takes a single sinful word to cause a person to plummet into Hell on Judgement Day. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. A muslim should adhere to the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by replying evil words with kind words or they should simply remain silent and ignore the person who utters foul language.

Conclusion

A muslim must strive to gain knowledge on the characteristics of a true believer and those characteristics they should avoid such as the ones discussed in this book. After gaining knowledge they must act on their knowledge as knowledge without action is foolish and of no value. All this must be done with the correct intention. This is why it has been said, all are in danger except the knowledgeable. And the knowledgeable are in danger except for the ones who act on their knowledge. This group are all in danger except for those who act with the correct intention meaning, to please Allah, the Exalted. And this group are in danger except for those who Allah, the Exalted, has mercy on.

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