

# Lessons from the Prophets

(PBUT)

**PodSeerah – Vol 3**



**Achieve Noble Character**

**Lessons from the Prophets (PBUT)**

**ShaykhPod Books**

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Lessons from the Prophets (PBUT)

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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](mailto:ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com).



## Introduction

Every Muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, yet they barely know them as they are too busy to study their lives, characters and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the lives, characters and teachings of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and supported their claim through actions by following in their footsteps. This is why they will be with them in the hereafter. If Muslims truly desire to be with them in the hereafter also then they must learn and follow their teachings.

Therefore, this book will discuss the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and their nations which have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that one can Achieve Noble Character by practically following in their footsteps thereby ending up with them in the hereafter.

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.

## **Lessons from the Prophets (PBUT)**

### **Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him**

#### **Ambassadors of Islam**

The first discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 30:

*“And when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successor [beginning with the Prophet Adam, peace be upon him].” ...”*

Muslims must remember the very important position they have been appointed to by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the ambassadors of Islam. It is extremely important for Muslims to fulfil this duty according to their potential. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many Muslims today believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest

part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A Muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A Muslim should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

In addition, this important position should remind Muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted, become angry with the Muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

## Corruption

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 30:

*“And when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successor [beginning with the Prophet Adam, peace be upon him].” They said, “Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood...””*

Corruption is when a person abuses the blessings they possess, especially their social influence, in order to gain worldly things, such as power and wealth. It affects a Muslim’s duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and leads to much sins against people, such as oppression.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, warns that when the general public cheats each other financially Allah, the Exalted, punishes them by appointing oppressive leaders over them. One aspect of this oppression is corruption which causes the general public great distress. The same Hadith warns that when the general public break their covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then they will be overpowered by their enemies who will illegally confiscate their wealth and property from them. Again, this is an aspect of corruption where people of influence, such as government officials, freely take the belongings of others without any fear of the consequences. When the general public becomes corrupt then

their leaders and other people in influential social positions are inspired to act in the same way believing this behaviour is accepted by the general public. This leads to corruption on a national level. But if the general public obeyed Allah, the Exalted, and avoided mistreating others through corruption then their leaders and those in an influential social position would not dare act in a corrupt way full well knowing the general public would not stand for it. And according to the Hadith quoted earlier, if the general public remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, He would protect them from corrupt officials by appointing people into influential positions who are just in their affairs.

Instead of taking the immature path of blaming others for the widespread corruption observed in the world Muslims should truly reflect on their own behaviour and if necessary adjust their attitude. Otherwise, corruption in society will only increase with the passing of time. No one should believe that as they are not in an influential social position they have no effect on the corruption which occurs in society. As proven by this discussion corruption occurs because of the negative behaviour of the general public and it therefore can only be removed by the good behaviour of the general public. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

*“...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...”*

## Obtaining Good

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 31:

*“And He taught Adam the names - all of them...”*

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.



## **Knowledge then Worship**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

*“And [mention] when We said to the angels, “Prostrate before Adam”; so they prostrated...”*

The superiority of knowledge compared to worship is clearly shown by this event. The Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, was newly created when this event occurred. He did not have much time to perform worship whereas the Angels and the Devil had been worshipping Allah, the Exalted, for countless centuries. The Holy Quran clearly declares that the reason the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, was given superiority to the Angels was because of the knowledge Allah, the Exalted, had granted him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 31-32:

*“And He taught Adam the names - all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, “Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful.” They said, “Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise.””*

From this it is clear that knowledge is superior to worship. This is quite evident as correct worship and other good deeds cannot be performed correctly without knowledge. It is why gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all Muslims. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. But it is important to note, that true beneficial knowledge is knowledge which is correct and acted upon.

## What Do You Seek?

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

*“And [mention] when We said to the angels, “Prostrate before Adam”; so they prostrated, except for Iblees [the Devil]. He refused...”*

It is important to note that the Devil is not an Angel but as he dwelled amongst them the command to prostrate included him. Chapter 18, verse 50.

*“...except for Iblees. He was of the jinn...”*

Muslims must avoid adopting the mentality of the Devil by only obeying Allah, the Exalted, when the situation suits them. Instead they must adopt the mentality of the Angels and always sincerely submit to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 6:

*“...over which are [appointed] angels...they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded.”*

It is important for Muslims to recognize why their worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. 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 disobedience]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”*

As they obey Allah, the Exalted, in order to receive worldly blessings the moment they fail to receive them or encounter a difficulty they often become angered which turns them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. These people often obey and disobey Allah, the Exalted, according to the situation they are facing which in reality contradicts true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though, desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, is acceptable in Islam yet, if one persists with this attitude they may become

like those mentioned in this verse. It is far better to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to be saved in the hereafter and obtain Paradise. This person is unlikely to alter their behaviour when encountering difficulties. But the highest and best reason is to obey Allah, the Exalted, simply because He is their Lord and the Lord of the universe. This Muslim, if sincere, will remain steadfast in all situations and through this obedience they will be granted both worldly and religious blessings which outstrip the worldly blessings the first type of person would ever receive.

To conclude, it is important for Muslims to reflect on their intention and if necessary correct it so that it encourages them to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in all situations.

## The Proud

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

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

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a person who possesses even an atom's worth of pride in their heart will not enter Paradise. He clarified that pride is when a person rejects the truth and looks down on others.

No amount of good deeds will benefit someone who possesses pride. This is quite obvious when one observes the Devil and how his countless years of worship did not benefit him when he became proud. In fact, the following verse clearly connects pride with disbelief so a Muslim must avoid this evil characteristic at all costs.

The proud is the one who rejects the truth when it is presented to them simply because it did not come from them and as it challenges their desires and mentality. The proud person also believes they are superior to others even though they are unaware of their own ultimate end and the ultimate end of others. This is plain ignorance. In reality, it is foolish to be proud of anything seeing as Allah, the Exalted, created and granted everything a person owns. Even the righteous deeds one performs are only due to the inspiration, knowledge and strength granted by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, being proud of something which does not innately belong to them is plain foolishness. This is just like a person who becomes proud over a mansion they do not even own or live in.

This is the reason why pride belongs to Allah, the Exalted, as He alone is the Creator and innate Owner of all things. The one who challenges Allah, the Exalted, in pride will be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4090.

A Muslim should instead follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and adopt humility. The humble truly recognise that all the good they possess and all the evil they are protected from comes from no one except Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, humility is more fitting for a person than pride. A person should not be fooled into believing humility leads to disgrace as no one has been more honoured than the humble servants of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed an increase in status for the one who adopts humility for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029.

## **Destruction of Deeds**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 12:

*"[Allah] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [the Devil] said, "I am better than him [Prophet Adam, peace be upon him]. You created me from fire and created him from clay [i.e., earth]."*

The Devil became envious that the newly created Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, who was made from clay was given superiority to him, even though he was made from fire and performed countless years of worship.

The Devil was mistaken when he declared that fire was superior to clay. Fire rages up which is a sign of exaltedness but greatness only belongs to Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, clay is an indication of humility which is a characteristic of the true servants of Allah, the Exalted.

All Muslims should avoid envy at all costs as it destroys one's good deeds just like fire destroys wood. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210. This is quite evident as the Devil's many



centuries of worship and righteous deeds were destroyed because of this envy, which in turn led to pride. The reason envy is such a serious and major sin is because in reality the envier's problem is not with another person it is in fact with Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who granted the blessing which is envied. So a person's envy only demonstrates their displeasure with the allocation and choice of Allah, the Exalted. They behave as if they know better than Allah, the Exalted.

## Paradise

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 35:

*“And We said, “O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will...””*

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a Muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a Muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All Muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a Muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

## **Becoming Pious**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 35:

*“And We said, “O Adam, dwell, you and your wife...But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.”*

It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, did not command them not to eat from the tree He instead warned them not to even approach it. This reminds Muslims to avoid doubtful and unlawful things as much as possible.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful.

Piety can be summed up to mean fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, 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 includes treating others how one desires to be treated by people.

An aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things take a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful. And the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things and only uses lawful things will protect their religion and honor.

If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, it occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech meaning, speech which derives no benefit nor is it a sin, often leads to evil speech such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoided the first step by not indulging in vain speech they would avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to adopt piety as described earlier, a branch of which is to avoid vain and doubtful things out of fear they will lead to the unlawful.

## Step Back and Assess

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 35-36:

*“And We said, “O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.” But Satan caused them to slip out of it...”*

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.



## Consulting Others

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verses 20-21:

*"But Satan whispered to them [Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and his wife]..."Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you become angels or become of the immortal." And he swore [by Allah] to them, "Indeed, I am to you from among the sincere advisors.""*

Muslims should only consult a few people in respect to their affairs. They should select these few people according to the advice of the Holy Quran. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 43:

*"...So ask the people of the message if you do not know."*

This verse reminds Muslims to consult those who possess knowledge. As consulting an ignorant person only leads to further trouble. Just like a person would be foolish to consult a car mechanic over their physical health a Muslim should only consult those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

In addition, a Muslim should only consult those who fear Allah, the Exalted. This is because they will never advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, those who do not fear or obey Allah, the Exalted, might possess knowledge and experience but they will easily advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, which only increases one's problems. In reality, those who fear Allah, the Exalted, possess true knowledge and only this knowledge will guide others through their problems successfully. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

## Traits of a Believer

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 22:

*“So he [the Devil] made them [Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and his wife] fall, through deception...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1964, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between a believer and an evil person.

A true believer can be considered naive in respect to people as they always interpret their words and actions in a positive way instead of always thinking bad about others. They do not judge others and instead treat people how they desire others to treat them. Loving for others what one loves for themselves is in fact the sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. They prove this through their actions by supporting others according to their means such as, financial and emotional support.

This Hadith describes a believer as noble as they act with good character in both public and in private. Meaning, they show good character in respect to Allah, the Exalted, by having a sincere intention and practically fulfill His commands, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They also fulfill the other aspect of faith which is to show good character to people by treating them according to the teachings of Islam, which includes fulfilling the rights of others, such as their dependents.

On the other hand an evil person behaves opposite to these characteristics. Specifically, they are deceitful and treacherous in respect to the rights they owe Allah, the Exalted, and people. They demand their rights in full but fail to fulfill the rights of others. They strive to fulfill their desires by any means necessary including unlawful means and do not care who they wrong in the process.

It is important for Muslims not to only rely on their declaration of faith but also strive to adopt the noble characteristics discussed in Islam.

## **Divine Prohibitions and Commands**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 22:

*“...And when they tasted of the tree, their private parts became apparent to them, and they began to fasten together over themselves from the leaves of Paradise. And their Lord called to them, "Did I not forbid you from that tree...”*”

It is important to understand that the prohibitions and commands of Allah, the Exalted, do not exist to make people's life harder. They only exist in order to benefit people in both this world and in the next even if these benefits are not apparent to people. For example, the negative effects of alcohol, which science has proven, was not always apparent such as its negative effect on the organs of the body. It only became unlawful in Islam to protect people from this and other harms. In addition, It is an aspect of faith to accept something without understanding its wisdoms. If all the wisdoms of the commands and prohibitions were made apparent then it would not allow Muslims to possess complete faith. Allah, the Exalted, does not benefit from these commands and prohibitions only people do.

## Reducing Evil Influences

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 22:

*“So he [the Devil] made them [Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and his wife] fall, through deception. And when they tasted of the tree...And their Lord called to them, "Did I not...tell you that Satan is to you a clear enemy?"”*

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.

## Best Human

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 23:

*"They [Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and his wife] said, "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.""*

The Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, was tricked into eating from the tree and being tricked into a sin is not recorded as a sin. None the less, out of humility the Holy Prophe Adam, peace be upon him, turned to Allah, the Exalted, as if he committed a sin.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4251, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people commit sins but the best person who commits sins is the one who sincerely repents.

As people are not Angels they are bound to commit sins. The thing that makes these people special is when they sincerely repent from their sins. Sincere repentance includes feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of



Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, making a firm promise not to commit the sin or a similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

It is important to note, minor sins can be erased through righteous deeds which has been advised in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 550. It advises that the five daily obligatory prayers and two consecutive Friday congregational prayers erase the minor sins committed in between them as long as major sins are avoided.

Major sins are only erased through sincere repentance. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to avoid all sins, minor and major, and if they happen to occur to immediately sincerely repent as the time of death is unknown. And they should continue obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

## The Descension

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 35-36:

*“And We said, “O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.” But Satan caused them to slip out of it and removed them from that [condition] in which they had been. And We said, “Go down, [all of you to Earth]...””*

This mentions when the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, was sent to Earth from Paradise after he was tricked by the Devil. In life a Muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties than when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is

proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a Muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

## Understand Your Companion

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 36:

*“...And We said, "Go down, [all of you to Earth], as enemies to one another...”*

This mentions when the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, his wife Hawa, may Allah be pleased with her, and the Devil were sent to Earth after they were both tricked by the Devil.

It is obvious how the Devil is an enemy of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, his wife and by extension the whole of mankind but this verse also warns that mankind will be enemies to each other also. This can be true even amongst loved ones such as a married couple.

There are countless examples in the world of how a person inspired their friend to take the wrong path in life which caused them serious trouble, such as prison. One should not only be cautious of people who possess bad characteristics as they will influence their friends in a negative way which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833.

But a Muslim should also be cautious over the people who seem to possess genuine love for them especially those who do not possess real knowledge. This is because the one who does not possess real knowledge will sometimes advise their loved ones incorrectly believing they have fulfilled and shown their love to their companion. For example, a wife may advise her tired husband to offer his obligatory prayer at home instead of at the Mosque with congregation. Even though according to some scholars it is permissible to offer one's obligatory prayer at home yet, this advice will only take one away from one of the greatest traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn will only take them further away from Allah, the Exalted. This wife may believe she has behaved in a loving way even though she has not. This is why gaining useful knowledge is extremely important and a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. This is because some things may seem difficult outwardly yet many blessings are contained within them. And many things may seem easy and even lawful yet they only take one away from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a Muslim should be cautious and remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and not get fooled by the advice a loved one gives. They should not assume the advice will benefit them just because it comes from a beloved companion.

## **A Temporary Settlement**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 36:

*"...And We said, "Go down, [all of you to Earth]...and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement and provision for a time."*

As indicated by this verse it is important to note that even though the Earth is a settlement for mankind it is only a temporary one.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2377, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that he was not concerned over the excess of this material world and his example in this world is of a rider who takes a short rest under the shade of a tree and then leaves it behind by moving on.

In reality, each person is a traveller who stays in this world for a very limited time compared to where they came from meaning, the world of the souls and to where they are heading which is the eternal hereafter. In fact, this world in comparison is like waiting at a bus stop. In this Hadith this world has been compared to a shadow. This is because a shadow does not last

long and fades away quickly without people even taking notice which is exactly how a person's days and nights pass away. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not mention a traveller's inn or a hotel as these are solid structures which indicate permanence. A fading shadow better describes this material world. This is because no matter how old a person is they always admit that their life flashed by and felt like a moment. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

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

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated a rider not someone walking as the one who is walking would rest more under the shade of the tree than a rider. This further indicates the limited time people spend in this world.

Taking a rest in the shade indicates the importance of one correctly using the material world in order to obtain the provisions they need just like the rider takes the provision they need namely, rest. A Muslim should therefore prepare for their immediate departure from this world by preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

This does not mean one should abandon this world as this Hadith clearly indicates one should make use of the material world in order to prepare for the hereafter. The rider takes a rest and Muslims must gather the things which will benefit them in the hereafter instead of dedicating their time to unnecessary things which will leave them empty handed on Judgment Day. Chapter 89 Al Fajar, verses 23-24:

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



## Following Guidance

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 38:

*“We said, “Go down from it [from Paradise to Earth], all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.””*

In this age, the guidance from Allah, the Exalted, are the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever sincerely obeys and follows them will be protected from fear and extreme sadness namely, grief. Muslims will still face difficulties in this world but this right guidance will prevent them from becoming overwhelmed by fear or grief and they therefore will remain steadfast in each situation so that they gain peace of mind and an uncountable reward in both worlds.

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.

## Obtaining Forgiveness

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 37:

*“Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance...”*

A divine Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3540, advises the importance and vastness of the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. The first part of the Hadith declares that as long as a Muslim sincerely supplicates to Allah, the Exalted, and hope's in His mercy they will be forgiven by Him.

This response has in fact been guaranteed for all lawful supplications in the Holy Quran not just for the supplication of forgiveness. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

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

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned this verse and declared that supplication is an act of worship meaning, a righteous deed. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1479. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604, advises that every supplication is accepted in different ways as long as it is a lawful one. The person is either granted what they requested or a reward will be reserved for them in the hereafter or they will be forgiven an equivalent sin. But it is important to note, that in order to receive a positive response a Muslim must fulfil the conditions and the etiquettes of the supplication.

One of the greatest supplications a Muslim can make is for forgiveness as it is a means for one obtaining blessings, avoiding difficulties in this world and a means to obtaining Paradise and escaping Hell in the next world. Chapter 71 Nuh, verses 10-12:

*“And said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in [continuing] showers. And give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers.’”*

As indicated by the main Hadith under discussion having hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, when supplicating is a condition for forgiveness. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, acts according to His servant's opinion of Him, which has been confirmed in a divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

One of the greatest causes of forgiveness is when a Muslim only hopes in Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them full well knowing no one can forgive them or protect them from punishment except Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that no matter how many sins a person commits the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is greater. In fact, it is unlimited therefore a person's limited sins will never be able to overcome it. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to magnify what they supplicate for as nothing is too great for Allah, the Exalted, to grant. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6812.

The next part of the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of sincerely seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, which has been mentioned in many verses and other Hadiths. This act of seeking forgiveness is a part of sincere repentance. It can be understood that seeking forgiveness is an act of the tongue while the rest of sincere repentance involves turning away from the sin through actions. It also includes feeling genuine remorse, making a firm promise not to commit the sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. It is important to note, that not persisting on the same sin is a condition for the repentance to be accepted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 135:

*“And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know.”*

It is extremely important for a Muslim to be persistent in seeking forgiveness as this leads to deliverance from every worry, a way out from every difficulty and support from places where one would not expect. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1518.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the greatest cause of forgiveness namely, not associating anything to Allah, the Exalted. There are two types of associating things with Allah, the Exalted: major polytheism and minor polytheism. The major type is when one worships things other than Allah, the Exalted, or in addition to Him. The minor version is when one acts for the sake of anyone except Allah, the Exalted, such as showing off. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. In fact, the one who acts for the sake of people will be told by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day to seek their reward from those they acted for, which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. The one who acts in this way will find that they will eventually be exposed in this world and no matter how well they treat others they will never gain their real love or respect because of their bad intention. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6705.

When one realises the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, they only think, act and speak for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, out of fear and love for Him. This behaviour minimises the chances of committing sins and whatever sins do occur will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. It is the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3797, that the statement there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, removes all wrong actions.

This is the behaviour all Muslims must strive to adopt. The foundation of it is fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.



## Sincere Effort Not Perfection

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 115:

*“And We had already taken a promise from Adam before, but he forgot; and We found not in him determination.”*

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, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and 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.

## **Gaining Divine Love**

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 122:

*“Then his Lord chose him [Prophet Adam, peace be upon him]...”*

When one strives to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, they will be selected for His love.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7432, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves the servant who possesses the following characteristics. The first characteristic is piety. This means they strive to fulfill their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and they fulfill their duties towards people, such as striving in this world in order to obtain their necessities and the necessities of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being independent of the creation. This means that a Muslim should fully utilize the means they have been provided by Allah, the Exalted, such as their physical strength in order to fulfill their duties. They should not behave lazily and seek things from people as this habit leads to dependence on them and reduces trusting in Allah, the Exalted. One should firmly believe that no matter what happens whatever is destined to be their provision was allocated to them 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. A Muslim should focus on their efforts and trust that Allah, the Exalted, will grant them what is best for them.

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being anonymous. This means a Muslim should not strive in worldly or religious matters in order to obtain fame. As this can lead to many sins, such as showing off, and this only destroys one's reward. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that seeking fame is more destructive to one's religion than two wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. Instead, a Muslim should strive to fulfill their duties and if they become famous they must maintain sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, without altering their obedience to Him in order to please people as this leads to destruction in both worlds.

## **Divine Forgiveness**

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 122:

*“Then his Lord...turned to him [Prophet Adam, peace be upon him] in forgiveness [for his lapse]...”*

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A Muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A Muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one

who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Muslims should act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

## Divine Guidance

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 122:

*“Then his Lord...guided [the Prophet Adam, peace be upon him].”*

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who guides His servants to what is beneficial for them in both worlds and guides them away from anything which harms them. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verse 8:

*“And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness.”*

The Muslim who understands this divine name will seek guidance in worldly and religious matters from none other than Allah, the Exalted, through the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever seeks guidance from anything else will not find lasting success.

A Muslim should act on this divine name by guiding others towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and what is beneficial to them in both worldly and religious matters according to their knowledge. This will ensure they become a true believer meaning, the one who loves for others what they desire for themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.



## **Outcome of Life**

During the Heavenly Journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, observed a man seated with two groups on his right and left side. When the man looked at the group on his right side he laughed but when he looked at the group on his left side he wept. The Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, commented that the man was the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and the two groups were the souls of his descendants. The group on his right side were the inmates of Paradise, which made him happy and the group on his left side were the inmates of Hell, which made him weep. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 415.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7232, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people will be resurrected on Judgment Day in the same state they died on Earth.

This means that if a person dies on good they will be resurrected on good. But if they die on evil they will be raised in an evil way.

A Muslim should not live in heedlessness by believing just because they have faith in Islam it guarantees they will die and therefore be raised in a good state on Judgment Day. If they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then die in this state without sincerely repenting then they

will be raised in an evil way. It does not take a scholar to determine what will happen to this person on Judgment Day.

From this Hadith one can understand that the way they will die will be in the same state they have lived. Meaning, if they lived in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will die in a good state and therefore be raised in a good state which includes being raised with the righteous as they practically followed in their footsteps. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

A Muslim should therefore not walk the path to Hell by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and believe that they will somehow be raised with the pious and end up in Paradise.

## **A Good Child**

During the Heavenly Journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, met a man. The Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, told the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to greet the man who was his father, the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, greeted him with the Islamic greeting of peace and the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, returned his greeting. The Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, addressed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as his son and added that he was a good son. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7517.

Being kind to parents is widely known characteristic amongst Muslims yet unfortunately many fail to fulfil this important duty. Allah, the Exalted, has placed being kind to parents next to solely worshipping Him in many places of the Holy Quran such as, chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 23:

*“And your Lord has decreed that you worship not except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], "uff,"<sup>1</sup> and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word.”*

In fact this same verse prohibits Muslims to even utter a single word out of annoyance towards their parents. In another place of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, has combined being grateful to Him with being grateful to parents. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 14:

*“...Be grateful to Me and to your parents...”*

Even though, there are countless Hadiths commanding treating parents kindly a single Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3662, is enough to understand its importance. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, answered someone who questioned what the rights of one's parents are by declaring that they are a child's Paradise or Hell. Meaning, if one treats their parents kindly for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they may well be admitted into Paradise because of it. But those who mistreat their parents may well be hurled into Hell because of it.

Even though, being obedient to parents, as long as it does not involve the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, is very difficult, especially, in this day and age Muslims should try to remain patient and not argue with their parents. If a Muslim disagrees with them they can and should still maintain respect for them at all times.

## **Heavenly Greeting**

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3326, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that after creating the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, Allah, the Exalted, told him to greet a group of Angels with the Islamic greeting of peace adding that this was going to be his greeting and the greeting of his offspring to one another. When he greeted the Angels with the Islamic greeting of peace by saying “peace be upon you” they replied and added to his greeting by saying “peace and Allah’s mercy be upon you.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 12, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised a good quality found within Islam. Namely, to spread the Islamic greeting of peace to people one knows and to those they do not know.

It is important to act on this good characteristic as nowadays Muslims often only spread the Islamic greeting of peace to those they know. It is important to spread it to all as this leads to love between people and strengthens Islam. In fact, this characteristic leads to Paradise according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 194.

A Muslim should never forget that they will receive a minimum of ten rewards for every greeting of peace they extend to others even if others fail

to reply to them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5195.

Finally, a Muslim should fulfill the Islamic greeting of peace correctly by demonstrating this peace in their other speech and actions towards others by keeping their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others. This is in fact, the definition of a true Muslim and believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

## **Holy Prophet Idrees, peace be upon him**

### **The Truth**

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verses 56-57:

*“And mention in the Book, Idrees. Indeed, he was a man of truth...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed the importance of truthfulness and avoiding lies. The first part advises that truthfulness leads to righteousness which in turn leads to Paradise. When a person persists on truthfulness they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a truthful person.

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their

words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.



## **Company of Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verses 56-57:

*“And mention in the Book, Idrees. Indeed...We raised him to a high station.”*

It is important to note that the closer one is to Allah, the Exalted, the higher their station is. In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He is with anyone who remembers Him.

With the rise of mental problems and disorders, such as depression, it is vital for Muslims to understand the importance of this declaration. There is a small chance of a person experiencing a mental issue when they are constantly surrounded and aided by someone that truly loves them. If this is true for a person it is undoubtedly more befitting for Allah, the Exalted, who has promised to be with the one who remembers Him. Acting on this declaration alone would eliminate all mental issues, such as depression. It is the reason why being secluded from others or being amongst others did not affect the mental state of the righteous predecessors as they were always in the company of Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious that when one obtains the company of Allah, the Exalted, they will overcome all obstacles and difficulties successfully until they reach His proximity in the hereafter.

In addition, out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, has not restricted this declaration in anyway. For example, He did not declare He was only with the righteous or with those who perform specific good deeds. He in fact encompassed every Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith or how many sins they have committed. So a Muslim should never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. But it is important to note the condition mentioned in this Hadith namely, to remember Allah, the Exalted. This is not only remembering Him with one's tongue but more importantly it is to remember Him through one's actions. This is only achieved by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The one who behaves in such a manner will be blessed with the company and support of Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, the more one obeys Allah, the Exalted, the more they will receive His company. What one gives is what they shall receive.

## True Patience

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 85:

*“And [mention]...Idrees...all were of the patient.”*

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

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

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

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

A patient Muslim understands that anything which effected them, such as a difficulty, could not have been avoided even if the entire creation aided them. Similarly, whatever missed them could not have affected them. The one who truly accepts this fact will not exult and grow proud over anything they obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, allocated that thing to them. Nor will they grieve over anything which they fail to obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, did not allocate that thing to them and nothing in existence can alter this fact. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

*“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register<sup>1</sup> before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allah, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you...”*

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

occurred. Being persistently patient can lead a Muslim to a greater level namely, contentment.

The one who is content does not desire things to change as they know the choice of Allah, the Exalted, is better than their choice. This Muslim firmly believes and acts on the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. It advises that every situation is best for the believer. If they encounter a problem they should show patience which leads to blessings. And if they experience times of ease they should show gratitude which also leads to blessings.

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

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

A Muslim will never reach full contentment until their behaviour is equal in times of difficulty and ease. How can a true servant go to the Master namely, Allah, the Exalted, for a judgment and then become unhappy if

the choice does not match their desire. There is a real possibility that if a person gets what they desire it will destroy them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

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

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

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

In addition, a Muslim should review the many verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the reward given to the patient and content Muslim. Deep reflection on this will inspire a Muslim to remain steadfast when facing difficulties. For example, Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

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

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

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

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



## Avoiding Ignorance

In a Hadith found in Imam Abu Na'im Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, number 380, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Prophet Idrees, peace be upon him, was the first to write with a pen. This Hadith indicates the importance of gaining and acting on useful knowledge and avoiding ignorance.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*"...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]..."*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

## **Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him**

### **Sincerity to All**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 59:

*"We had certainly sent Noah to his people, and he said, "O my people...I fear for you the punishment of a tremendous Day.""*

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 general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themselves.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this

Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themselves in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

*“...Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them...”*

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

*“...And do good as Allah has done good to you...”*

## Criticism and Praise

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 60:

*"Said the eminent among his [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] people, "Indeed, we see you in clear error.""*

A Muslim should always remember that there are two types of people. The first are rightly guided as their criticism of others is based on the criticism and advice found in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This type will always be constructive and guide one to blessings and the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These people will also refrain from over or under praising others. Over praising others can cause them to become proud and arrogant. Under praising others can lead them to becoming lazy and put them off from doing good. This reaction is often observed in children. Praising according to the teachings of Islam will inspire others to strive harder in both worldly and religious matters and it will prevent them from becoming arrogant. Therefore, the praise and constructive criticism of this person should be accepted and acted upon even if comes from a stranger.

The second type of person criticises based on their own desires. This criticism is mostly unconstructive and only shows one's bad mood and attitude. These people often over and under praise others as they act based on their own desires. The negative effects of these two were

mentioned earlier. Therefore, the criticism and praise of this person should be ignored in the majority of cases even if it comes from a loved one as it will only cause one to become unnecessarily sad in cases of criticism and arrogant in cases of praise.

It is important to remember that a person who over praises others will often over criticise them too. The rule one should always follow is that they should only accept the criticism and praise based on the teachings of Islam. All other things should be ignored and not taken personally.

## Lead By Example

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 62:

*"I [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] convey to you the messages of my Lord and advise you..."*

It is important for all Muslims, especially parents, to act on what they advise to others. It is obvious if one turns the pages of history that those who acted on what they preached had a much more positive effect on others compared to those who did not lead by example. The best example being the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who not only practiced what he preached but adhered to those teachings more strictly than anyone else. Only with this attitude will Muslims especially, parents have a positive impact on others. For example, if a mother warns her children not to lie as it is a sin but often lies in front of them her children are unlikely to act on her advice. A person's actions will always have more of an impact on others than their speech. It is important to note that this does not mean one needs to be perfect before advising others. It means they should sincerely strive to act on their own advice before advising others. The Holy Quran has made it clear in the following verse that Allah, the exalted, hates this behaviour. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, that the a person who commanded good but refrained from it themselves and prohibited evil yet acted on it themselves will be punished in severely Hell. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:



*“Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not do.”*

So it is vital for all Muslims to strive to act on their advice themselves then advise others to do the same. Leading by example is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and is the best way to affect others in a positive way.

## The Guardian

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 64:

*“But they denied him [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him], so We saved him...in the ship...”*

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]...”*

## Good Companionship

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 64:

*“But they denied him [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him], so We saved him and those who were with him in the ship...”*

They were saved as they took the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, as their companion and leader. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5534, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between a good and bad companion. The good companion is like a person who sells perfume. Their companion will either obtain some perfume or at least be affected by the pleasant smell. Whereas, a bad companion is like a blacksmith, if their companion does not burn their clothes they will certainly be affected by the smoke.

Muslims must understand that the people they accompany will have an effect on them whether this affect is positive or negative, obvious or subtle. It is not possible to accompany someone and not be affected by it. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, confirms that a person is on their companion's religion. Meaning, a person adopts the characteristics of their companion. It is therefore important for Muslims to always accompany the righteous as they will undoubtedly affect them in a positive way meaning, they will inspire them to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing

destiny with patience. Whereas, bad companions will either inspire one to disobey Allah, the Exalted, or they will encourage a Muslim to concentrate on the material world over preparing for the hereafter. This attitude will become a great regret for them on Judgment Day even if the things they strive for are lawful but beyond their needs.

Finally, as a person will end up with those they love in the hereafter according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, a Muslim must practically show they love for the righteous by accompanying them in this world. But if they accompany bad or heedless people then it proves and indicates they love for them and their ultimate destination in the hereafter. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

*“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”*

## Being Observant

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 64:

*“But they denied him [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him], so We saved him and those who were with him in the ship. And We drowned those who denied Our signs. Indeed, they were a blind people.”*

A Muslim must avoid sharing the fate of those who denied the Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, by utilizing their perception in the correct way.

It is important for a Muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a Muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A Muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

## **Trusting in Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 71:

*“And recite to them the news of Noah, when he said...“...then I have relied upon Allah...””*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2344, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if people truly trusted Allah, the Exalted, He would provide for them just like He provides for birds. They leave their nests hungry in the morning and return in the evening satisfied.

Truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is something which is felt in the heart but is proven through the limbs meaning, when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

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



The aspect of trust which is internal involves firmly believing that only Allah, the Exalted, can provide one with beneficial things and protect them from harmful things both in worldly and religious matters. A Muslim understands that no one except Allah, the Exalted, can give, withhold, harm or benefit someone.

It is important to note, that truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, does not mean one should abandon using the means which Allah, the Exalted, has provided, such as medicine. As the main Hadith under discussion clearly mentions that the birds leave their nests actively searching for provision. When one uses the strength and means provided by Allah, the Exalted, according to the teachings of Islam they are undoubtedly obeying Him. This is in fact, the outward element of trusting in Allah, the Exalted. This has been made clear in many verses and Hadiths. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 71:

*“O you who have believed, take your precaution...”*

In reality, the outward activity is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and trusting Allah, the Exalted, inwardly is the inward state of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One should not abandon the outward tradition even if they possess the inward state of trust.

Actions and using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting Him. In this respect, actions can be split into three categories. The first are those actions of obedience which Allah, the

Exalted, commands Muslims to do so that they can avoid Hell and obtain Paradise. Abandoning these while claiming trust that Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them is simply wishful thinking and is therefore blameworthy.

The second type of actions are those means which Allah, the Exalted, has created in this world in order for people to live in it safely, such as eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty and wearing warm clothes in cold weather. A person who abandons these and causes harm to themselves is blameworthy. However, there are some people who have been provided special strength by Allah, the Exalted, so that they can avoid these means without harming themselves. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used to fast for days on end uninterrupted but forbade others from doing the same as Allah, the Exalted, provided for him directly without the need for food. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1922. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed for the fourth rightly guided Caliph Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, so that he would not feel excess cold or heat. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 117. Therefore, if a person turns away from these means but is provided with the strength to endure without failing in their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people then it is acceptable otherwise it is blameworthy.

The third type of actions in respect to trusting in Allah, the Exalted, are those things which have been set as a customary practice which Allah, the Exalted, sometimes breaks for certain people. An example of this are the people who become cured of illnesses without the need of medicine. This is quite common especially in poorer countries where medicine is difficult to obtain. This is linked to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2144, which advises that no person will die until they utilize every ounce of their provision which was allocated to them, which according to another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, was

over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. So the one who truly realises this Hadith might not seek provision actively knowing that what was allocated to them so long ago cannot miss them. So for this person the customary means of obtaining provision such as obtaining it through a job is broken by Allah, the Exalted. This is a high and rare rank. Only the one who can behave in such a manner without complaining or panicking nor expecting things from people is free of blame if they choose this path. It is important to note, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692, that it is a sin for a person to fail in providing for their dependents even though they may be on this high rank.

Having real trust in Allah, the Exalted, leads to being content with destiny. Meaning, whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them they accept without complaint and without desiring things to change as they firmly trust that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the 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.”*

To conclude, it is best to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by using the lawful means one has been granted firmly believing they are from Allah, the Exalted, and trust internally that only what Allah, the Exalted, decides will occur, which is undoubtedly the best choice for each person whether they observe this or not.

## Standing Firm

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 71:

*“And recite to them the news of Noah, when he said to his people, “O my people, if my residence and my reminding of the signs of Allah has become burdensome upon you - then I have relied upon Allah. So resolve upon your plan and [call upon] your associates. Then let not your plan be obscure to you. Then carry it out upon me and do not give me respite.””*

This verse reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain

an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend himself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable Muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

## Gaining Reward

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 72:

*“...then no payment have I [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] asked of you. My reward is only from Allah...”*

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.

## **True Muslim and Believer**

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 72:

*“...and I [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] have been commanded to be of the Muslims.”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true Muslim and a true believer. A true Muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A Muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.



A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a Muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a Muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

## Warnings

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 25:

*“And We had certainly sent Noah to his people, [saying], “Indeed, I am to you a clear warner.””*

This verse indicates the importance of implementing the teachings of Islam as reminders namely; glad tidings and warnings only benefit the person who acts on them. For example, those who ignore road hazard signs are often the ones who end up in dangerous situations. But those who act upon these hazards signs are protected from this danger. The glad tidings indicate the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon lead to the gardens of Paradise. And the warnings are the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon protects one from divine punishment such as Hell.

## Where Greatness Lies

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 27:

*“So the eminent among those who disbelieved from his [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] people said, “We do not see you but as a man like ourselves, and we do not see you followed except by those who are the lowest of us [and] at first suggestion. And we do not see in you over us any merit...””*

This reminds Muslims that greatness and true success is not connected to worldly things, such as wealth or fame. A person may obtain some worldly success through these things but it is quite obvious if one turns the pages of history that this type of success is very temporary and it eventually becomes a burden and regret for a person. A Muslim should never believe that superiority lies in these things thereby dedicating themselves to obtaining them while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Nor should they look down at others who do not possess these worldly things believing they have no value or significance as this attitude contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6071, that the people of Paradise are those who are considered insignificant by society and concluded that if they took an oath on something Allah, the Exalted, would fulfil it for them.

True honour, success and greatness in this world and the next only lies in piety. So the more one sincerely strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the greater they are even if they appear insignificant to society. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A Muslim should therefore search for true success in this and not waste their time and efforts in searching for it in worldly things otherwise they may well reach the hereafter a great loser. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

*“Say, [O Muhammad], "Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.””*

## Divine Mercy

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 28:

*“...He has given me [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] mercy from Himself...”*

Allah, the Exalted, is the Most Merciful according to His infinite status. This attribute means that Allah, the Exalted, bestows countless favours on the creation and is always extremely kind to them. This same characteristic has been attributed to others such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 128:

*“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you [i.e., your guidance] and to the believers is kind and merciful.”*

When used in reference to the creation merciful means soft-hearted and compassionate. A Muslim must adopt these qualities by looking at the creation through the eye of mercy and by treating them with mercy and compassion whether they are obedient or sinful. Many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 6030, indicate that the one who does not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy by Allah, the

Exalted. So it is vital for Muslims to show mercy to all through their actions such as financial and physical help and through their words such as supplicating for them. Islam in fact rewards a Muslim who shows mercy to all living things such as animals. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550.

## Arguing

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 28:

*“[Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, said]...should we force it [faith] upon you while you are averse to it?”*

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.



## **Not a Controller**

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 36:

*“And it was revealed to Noah that, “No one will believe from your people except those who have already believed, so do not be distressed by what they have been doing.””*

It is important for Muslims to understand an important point in respect to advising others. It is the duty of Muslims to advise others towards good and forbid evil but a Muslim should not behave as if they have been put in charge as controllers over others. This attitude only leads to anger and bitterness especially, when others do not follow their advice. It is best for Muslims to discharge their duty by advising others but they should avoid stressing over the outcome of their advice meaning, whether the person acts on their advice or not. If Allah, the Exalted, advised the greatest teacher and guide of mankind namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to stress over the outcome in many places of the Holy Quran how can a Muslim claim or behave as if they have been put in charge of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

*“So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”*

The Muslim who behaves as a controller will not only become bitter when people fail to follow their advice but it can lead them to giving up advising others which is a duty on all Muslims according to their ability.

In addition, this attitude will also cause Muslims to neglect themselves and their own duties as they are too busy concerning themselves with the duties of others. Therefore, Muslims should remain firm in commanding good and forbidding evil but refrain from observing and bothering about the outcome of their advice.

## **Excellence of Faith**

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 37:

*“[Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, was told] And construct the ship under Our observation...”*

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of Ihsan, which can be translated to mean excellence. This excellence refers to one’s conduct and behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Acting with excellence has been mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as chapter 10 Yunus, verse 26:

*“For them who have done excellent is the best [reward] - and extra...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has explained this verse in Hadiths found in Sahih Muslim, numbers 449 and 450. The word extra in this verse refers to when the inhabitants of Paradise will be blessed with the divine vision of Allah, the Exalted. This reward befits the Muslim who acts with excellence. As excellence means to lead one’s life as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted, observing their outer and inner being at all times. A person who can observe a powerful authority watching them will never misbehave out of awe of them. In fact,

the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised someone to always behave as if they were constantly being observed by a righteous man they respected. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, number 5539.

Whoever acts in this manner will very rarely commit sins and always hasten towards good deeds. This attitude creates the fear of Allah, the Exalted, and acts as a shield from the fire of trials in this world and the fire of Hell in the hereafter. This vigilance will ensure one not only fulfills all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, but it also encourages them to fulfill their responsibilities towards the creation. The peak of which is to sincerely treat others with kindness. This person will fulfill the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 251, which advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This level of excellence ensures one acts with the right intention, which is the foundation of faith according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Success is guaranteed for the one who performs good deeds and demonstrates good behavior with the right intention namely, to please Allah, the Exalted. The more excellent a person acts the stronger their faith becomes until they become a Muslim who is far from heedlessness and is always struggling to beautify their hereafter and worldly life according to the teachings of Islam.

It is feared that the opposite of this reward will be given to those who turned away from Allah, the Exalted. As they lived without fearing the all-encompassing gaze of Allah, the Exalted, they will be veiled from seeing Him in the hereafter. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 15:

*“No! Indeed, from their Lord, that Day, they will be partitioned.”*

Those who fail to reach the level of acting as if they witness Allah, the Exalted, must act on the second part of the advice given in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning. This person should sincerely believe that Allah, the Exalted, is constantly observing them. Even though this state is lower in rank than the one who acts as if they observe Allah, the Exalted, none the less, it is a great way of adopting true fear of Allah, the Exalted. As mentioned earlier this attitude will prevent one from committing sins and encourage them towards good deeds. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in Imam Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, number 7935, the one who strives to adopt this mentality will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

The divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, is mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 4:

*“...He is with you wherever you are. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised to adopt the true awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, in many Hadiths. For example, in one divine Hadith found in

Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He is with whoever remembers Him. This is the reason why it has been reported in Hilyat Al Awliya, volume 1, pages 84 and 85, about the Commander of the Faithful, Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, that he shied away from the glitter and pomp of the material world and only found solace in the lonely night. Meaning, he sought the companionship of Allah, the Exalted, rather than the companionship of people.

Adopting the awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, not only prevents sins and encourages good deeds but it also prevents loneliness and depression. A person is very rarely affected by mental health issues when they are constantly surrounded by a person who loves them and aids them. No one loves the creation more than Allah, the Exalted, and there is no doubt that He is the source of all aid. Therefore, acting with excellence benefits one's faith, actions, emotional state and the wider society.

A Muslim must avoid becoming like those who treat Allah, the Exalted, as the most insignificant of those who observe them. This is a serious spiritual illness which leads to all types of sins and evil behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

## Mocking Others

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 38:

*“And he [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] constructed the ship, and whenever an assembly of the eminent of his people passed by him, they ridiculed him...”*

Mocking others occurs when one ridicules and highlights the defects of another in order to cause others to laugh and look down at them. This can be done through actions or words. In most cases, this is a sin as it involves degrading and insulting others. It is not a sin if the feelings of the one being mocked do not change negatively and when sinful words are not used. This is extremely rare especially, in this day and age. Mocking has been prohibited by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 11:

*“O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2505, that

whoever mocks another over a sin the latter has repented from will not die until they commit the same sin. It is important for Muslims to avoid this characteristic as it in most cases creates enmity between people and this always leads to fractured or broken relationships.



## **In the Name of Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 41:

*“And [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] said, "Embark therein; in the name of Allah...””*

There is no doubt that before all lawful actions the blessed name of Allah, the Exalted, should be mentioned. If it is not remembered a Muslim will gain less reward for the action they intend to do as it is the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. Secondly, they will lose out on the grace which accompanies the remembrance of the blessed name of Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1894.

In addition, the blessed name of Allah, the Exalted, should be recalled before any action as it prevents the reciter from committing sins by reminding them of the divine presence and observance of Allah, the Exalted. Beginning with the blessed name of Allah, the Exalted, ensures a Muslim's mind is always turned towards Him regardless of if they are in a Mosque, at home or at work. When a Muslim's attention is towards Allah, the Exalted, they will increase their obedience to Him and therefore reap much reward. In reality, sins only occur when a Muslim forgets the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, when one begins good actions with the blessed name of Allah, the Exalted, it encourages them to perform the deed sincerely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. In other words, it ensures their intention is correct. This is vital as a person's actions will be judged according to their intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Therefore, remembering His blessed name before an action is an excellent way to achieve the correct intention.

Remembering the blessed name of Allah, the Exalted, also prevents one from adopting pride after completing a good deed as this remembrance reminds a Muslim that the strength, knowledge and opportunity to perform the good deed came from none other than Allah, the Exalted. This ensures they keep their good deed safe instead of destroying it through pride.

## **Persist on Good**

The next discussion is based on chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 14:

*“And We certainly sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them a thousand years minus fifty years, and the flood seized them while they were wrongdoers.”*

After such effort only a handful of people accepted faith. The lesson to learn from this is that one should never give up advising good and forbidding evil even if people do not accept the advice. One should be persistent like the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, and not give up after trying a few times. A Muslim's duty is to do good themselves and advise others to do the same and whether this advice is accepted is something which is out of their control. A person should always remember that as advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all actions are judged by their intention. So in this respect, the outcome does not really matter meaning, if people accept and act on a person's advice or not. Instead, it is their intention which is rewarded. So a person who has a good intention namely, to please Allah, the Exalted, will get much reward even if no one accepts their advice. On the other hand, a Muslim will get no reward and may even face punishment even if millions of people accept and act on their advice if their intention is evil for example, in order to show off to others. As long as one proves their intention through actions according to their strength they should hope for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and a great reward.

In addition, when one performs good deeds they should not be bothered if people accept their advice or appreciate their efforts as Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that He appreciates the efforts of His servants. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 30:

*“...Indeed, He is Forgiving and Appreciative.”*

So if one obtains the appreciation of Allah, the Exalted, they should not care for anything else.

## Pride in Lineage

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verses 42-46:

*"...and Noah called to his son who was apart [from them], "O my son, come aboard with us and be not with the disbelievers."...And the waves came between them, and he was among the drowned...And Noah called to his Lord and said, "My Lord, indeed my son is of my family; and indeed, Your promise is true; and You are the most just of judges!" He said, "O Noah, indeed he is not of your family; indeed, he is [one whose] work was other than righteous, so ask Me not for that about which you have no knowledge. Indeed, I advise you, lest you be among the ignorant.""*

These verses discuss when the non-believer son of the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, drowned in the great flood. Even though, he was the biological son of the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, yet Allah, the Exalted, declared that he was not a member of his family meaning, the family of faith. It is important to understand that one should not be proud and rely on their family ties to succeed in the hereafter. Each person will be judged according to their own intention, efforts and deeds. A person can benefit others through good deeds such as giving charity on their behalf which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 2770, but a person cannot turn away from righteous deeds and the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then expect the deeds and status of their relatives to save them. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225. The one who acts in this way may well encounter the same end as the son of the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him.

## True Belief

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verses 42-46:

*"...and Noah called to his son who was apart [from them], "O my son, come aboard with us and be not with the disbelievers."...And the waves came between them, and he was among the drowned...And Noah called to his Lord and said, "My Lord, indeed my son is of my family; and indeed, Your promise is true; and You are the most just of judges!" He said, "O Noah, indeed he is not of your family; indeed, he is [one whose] work was other than righteous..."*

These verses discuss when the non-believer son of the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, drowned in the great flood. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, did not point out that he was a non-believer instead Allah, the Exalted, criticized his lack of good deeds. This is a clear warning to Muslims that they must not solely rely on their internal belief and must instead strive to perform righteous deeds.

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.

## Useless Questions

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 47:

*"[Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] said, "My Lord, I seek refuge in You from asking that of which I have no knowledge..."*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3257, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against asking too many questions as this led to the destruction of the past nations. Muslims should instead do what they have been commanded according to their capacity and refrain from what they have been prohibited from.

Muslims should not adopt this mentality as people who have a habit of asking too many questions often fail in fulfilling their duties and acquiring beneficial knowledge as they are too busy asking and researching about less important and sometimes irrelevant information. This mentality can inspire a person to argue and debate over these types of issues also. Unfortunately, this attitude is quite widespread amongst Muslims today as they often argue about non obligatory and less important issues instead of concentrating on fulfilling their obligatory duties and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, correctly meaning, fulfilling them with their full etiquettes and conditions.



A Muslim should instead research and query about topics which are relevant and important to understand for both worldly and religious matters otherwise they will follow in the footsteps of the people mentioned in this Hadith and only make their own lives more difficult.

## **No Success without Mercy**

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 47:

*"[Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] said, "...And unless You forgive me and have mercy upon me, I will be among the losers.""*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6464, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person's good deeds will not take them to Paradise.

A Muslim must understand that their righteous deeds are a blessing from Allah, the Exalted, as the inspiration, knowledge, strength and opportunity to perform them comes from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Understanding this fact prevents the deadly characteristic of pride. An atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

## Peace and Blessings

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 48:

*"It was said, "O Noah, disembark in peace from Us and blessings upon you..."*

Peace and blessings are something which all people, irrespective of their faith, desire.

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.

## A Positive Response

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 76:

*“And [mention] Noah, when he called [to Allah] before [that time], so We responded to him...”*

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who answers all supplications by either fulfilling one's requests, removing an equivalent sin from their book of deeds or by saving reward for them in the hereafter as long as the etiquettes and conditions of a supplication are fulfilled. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604. Allah, the Exalted, is in fact far too generous and shy to turn away a beggar from His door empty handed. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3556.

The Muslim who understands this divine name will persist on supplicating to Allah, the Exalted, and never give up hope of an answer. They will strive to fulfil all the conditions and etiquettes of a supplication in order to guarantee its acceptance.

A Muslim must act on this divine name by fulfilling the good requests of people. In fact, a Hadith found in Shama'il At Tirmidhi, number 335,

advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never turned someone down when asked for something good.

## Key to Paradise

The next discussion is based on chapter 23 Al Mu'minun, verse 23:

*“And We had certainly sent Noah to his people, and he said, “O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him...””*

There are many Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which advise mankind that whoever testifies that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted, will be saved from the fire of Hell. One such example is found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128.

The meaning of these Hadiths is that whoever dies while believing in this testimony will either enter Paradise and escape Hell or they will enter Hell to the extent of their sins and then eventually be allowed into Paradise where they will dwell forever. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7510.

It is important to note, that those who desire to enter Paradise without entering Hell first must not only declare their belief in Islam verbally but they must also fulfil its conditions and obligations. The testimony of faith is undoubtedly the key to Paradise but a key needs teeth in order to

unlock a specific door. The teeth of the key to Paradise are its obligations and duties. Without them meaning, the key without its teeth, will not open the door to Paradise. This is proven through many Hadiths which indicate entry into Paradise requires one to fulfil the conditions and duties of Islam. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1397, indicates that the testimony must be supported by actions in the form of the pillars of Islam, such as establishing the obligatory prayers.

The first part of the testimony namely, there is none worthy of worship save Allah, the Exalted, means that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who must be obeyed and never disobeyed. When one accepts Allah, the Exalted, as their God they must not obey anything which leads to His disobedience as Allah, the Exalted, alone is their Master and they are only His slaves. But the moment one obeys anything which leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they have corrupted their belief in His Oneness which has been indicated in chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

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

The Holy Quran has warned Muslims that whoever commits sins is in reality worshipping the Devil as they have obeyed him over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 36 Yaseen, verse 60:

*“Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam, that you not worship Satan - [for] indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”*



The Muslims who reject their desires, the desires of others and the commands of the Devil and instead only obey Allah, the Exalted, have truly taken Allah, the Exalted, as their God. These Muslims have been granted the protection of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These Muslims have practically actualised the testimony of Islam as they supported their verbal and internal claim with sincere actions according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When one acts according to his traditions they have fulfilled the second aspect of the testimony namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted. These Muslims are the ones referred to in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128. It advises they will be saved from the Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted.

The person who declares Islam with the tongue and internally accepts it is undoubtedly a Muslim but their true sincere belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, is diminished according to their sins.

An aspect of truly acting on the testimony is sincerely loving Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has indicated this in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. It advises that this is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is when one loves what Allah, the Exalted, loves and hates what He hates. As this was the characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2333, Muslims have been commanded to follow him. 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...”*

It is clear from Islamic teachings that loving what Allah, the Exalted, hates and disliking what Allah, the Exalted, loves is a clear indication of a person following their own desires and obeying them over Allah, the Exalted. This attitude reduces one's belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. The following verse makes it clear that adopting this mentality is a deviation from true belief in the testimony of Islam. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 24:

*“Say, [O Muhammad], “If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.””*

The one who worships Allah, the Exalted, according to their own desires worships Him on the edge. Meaning, when they face times of ease they become pleased but when they encounter difficulties they turn away from His obedience in anger. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

*“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his*

*face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”*

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, informs Muslims how to correctly believe and act on the testimony of faith, which prevents one being harmed by the fire of Hell in the next world. This is to first complete the obligatory duties correctly while fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes. Then one must add to this by performing voluntary righteous deeds, the best of which are the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the love of Allah, the Exalted, and causes Allah, the Exalted, to empower every organ of their body so that they only obey Him. This true and sincere obedience is the fulfilment of the testimony of faith. This is the sound heart which contains only the love of Allah, the Exalted, and is free of worldly desires and the love of the material world. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

*“The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart.”*

It is important to note, this does not mean a Muslim becomes free from committing sins but it means they sincerely repent from them whenever they are rarely committed.

To conclude, it is vital for Muslims to not only declare the testimony of Islam internally and verbally but they must also show it in their actions as

this is the only way to achieve true success in this world and completely escape punishment in the next world also.

## **Patience in Advising**

The next discussion is based on chapter 23 Al Mu'minun, verses 24-25:

*“But the eminent among those who disbelieved from his people said, “...He [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] is not but a man possessed with madness...””*

Whenever one invites others towards Islam, commands good and forbids evil they will be challenging the heedless lifestyle of many others which will inspire them to resist the truth anyway they can. The major reason all the past nations rejected their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, was due to this very reason. They could not abandon their lifestyles and characteristics and in defense of them were prepared to wage war against Allah, the Exalted, and their Holy Prophet, peace be upon him. When one takes up this important duty they must be prepared to face many hardships caused by others including their own relatives. The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, are the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they encountered countless difficulties from their nations. One only needs to study the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to observe this fact. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472, that no one in creation had been persecuted in the path of Allah, the Exalted, more than him.

In cases like this one's response to the bad attitude of others should be educated, respectful and gentle. An example of this is found in chapter 19 Maryam, verses 46-47:

*"[His father] said, "Have you no desire for my gods, O Abraham? If you do not desist, I will surely stone you, so avoid me a prolonged time." [Abraham] said, "Peace [i.e., safety] will be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Indeed, He is ever gracious to me."*

Here the kind and respectful response of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, to the harsh attitude of his elder is discussed.

In most cases, a person must possess a character flaw if they claim to get along with everyone. Due to the differences within the members of society a person will never get along with everyone. They will always be one or more that disagree with their mentality, life style and advice. This diversity will lead to tension and occasionally problems. But if a person is liked by everyone then in most cases it shows they have adopted the mentality of the hypocrites by being two-faced. If the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were not loved by all how can a normal person achieve this status? This is the reason one should not believe in propaganda as the group that were mistreated the most in this way were the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023.

For example, the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was once falsely accused of illegal relations by a shameless woman. She was

enticed into slandering him by the enemy of Allah, the Exalted, Quraon. When she accused the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, publically during a religious gathering he interrogated her. When she observed his reaction she immediately retracted her accusation and admitted the truth. As a result Allah, the Exalted, destroyed Quraon by commanding the Earth to swallow him and his great treasury. This incident has been recorded in Imam Dhahabi's, The Major Sins, Pages 166-167. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 81:

*“And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home...”*

The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were slandered on many occasions but they remained steadfast on their mission until they were granted victory by Allah, the Exalted. When Allah, the Exalted, decides to complete a task like aiding the one who spreads the true word of faith the entire creation combined cannot stop Him.

Muslims must accept that they too will face hardships when spreading the word of Islam. Therefore, they must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, by remaining steadfast in the face of difficulties. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. If one desires to join them in the next world they must adopt this attitude also.

## **Divine Support and Blessings**

The next discussion is based on chapter 23 Al Mu'minun, verse 29:

*“And say [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him], “My Lord, let me land at a blessed landing place, and You are the best to accommodate [us].””*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1081, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims how to gain blessings in their provision, divine support and an improvement in their condition and state.

The first thing is to sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted, before one dies. As the time of death is unknown this Hadith actually indicates sincerely repenting whenever one commits a sin meaning, repenting without delay. This consists of seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and whoever else has been wronged, feeling regret, making a firm promise not to commit the same or a similar sin again. And finally, if possible, to make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

The next thing advised in the main Hadith is that a Muslim must make use of their time before they become preoccupied with responsibilities, an illness or a difficulty. A Muslim can achieve this by obeying Allah, the



Exalted, through fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must hasten to perform righteous deeds within their means as much as possible without delay as the tomorrow they hope for may never come. It is hoped that the one who behaves in this manner will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, when they are no longer in a position to perform extra righteous deeds due to a change in circumstances.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a Muslim must strengthen their bond with Allah, the Exalted, by remembering Him much. True remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, consists of three levels. The first is internal remembrance meaning, sincerity to Him. The second level consists of remembering Allah, the Exalted, by speaking good words and avoiding vain and sinful speech. And the highest level is to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, through one's actions as outlined earlier.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith is giving much charity both hidden and open. This includes both the obligatory and voluntary charity. It is important to note, this means giving charity according to one's means whether it is much or little. Allah, the Exalted, does not observe quantity He observes and judges actions based on quality meaning, one's sincerity. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. This leaves Muslims with no excuses but to give charity according to their means. In addition, it is important to give charity regularly instead of once in a while as regular deeds are more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, even if they are little. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465. Finally, those who desire to encourage others to give charity can give it publically. This will lead to them gaining the same reward as those who donate because of their inspiration. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. But those who are fearful of showing off, which

cancels their reward, should do so privately. Islam has provided many options and opportunities for Muslims to gain much reward which lead to the removal of their burdens in both worlds.

## **Fearing Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 106:

*"When their brother Noah said to them, "Will you not fear Allah?""*

Piety cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*"...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge..."*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect

their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

## Equality

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 111-114:

*"They [people of the Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] said, "Should we believe you while you are followed by the lowest [class of people]?"...Their account is only upon my Lord, if you [could] perceive. And I am not one to drive away the believers.""*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a Muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or wealth. Even though, many Muslims have erected these barriers such as social castes and sects thereby believing some are better than others Islam has clearly rejected this concept and declared that in this respect all people are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one Muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A Muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the Muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

## Certainty through Knowledge

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 119-121:

*“So We saved him [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] and those with him in the laden ship. Then We drowned thereafter the remaining ones. Indeed in that is a sign, but most of them were not to be believers.”*

These verses invite people to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they obtain certainty of faith.

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...”*

## **Essence of Worship**

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 75:

*“And Noah had certainly called Us, and [We are] the best of responders.”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3371, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that supplication is the essence of worship.

This is because it is a practical demonstration of humility and one's servant hood to Allah, the Exalted, as it is befitting for the servant to ask from the Master.

It is important to know that according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604, every good supplication is accepted in three ways. It is either fulfilled, the equivalent reward is given in the hereafter or an equivalent evil is removed from one's life.

In chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60, Allah, the Exalted, guarantees a response to all those who perform supplication. Therefore, one should always bear this in mind and persist in supplications.

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

Even before supplicating one should ensure their earnings are lawful and what they consume is lawful. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2989, that the supplication of a person who earns and consumes the unlawful will never be accepted.

The first etiquette of supplication is that one should try to face the Qibla when supplicating. This was the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. An example of this action is found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2899.

One should raise their hands begging Allah, the Exalted, to fulfill their desire as this was the practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1030.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the

Exalted, is too shy and generous to turn away a beggar empty handed who raises their hands to Him.

One should begin and conclude their supplication by first praising Allah, the Exalted, and then sending blessings upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1481.

In fact, as mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 486, a person's supplication remains suspended between the Heavens and the Earth until they send blessings upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

One should praise Allah, the Exalted, with phrases mentioned in the Holy Quran or the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The beautiful names of Allah, the Exalted, are found extensively throughout these divine teachings and should be utilised. For example, chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 24:

*“He is Allah, the Creator, the Producer, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names...”*

The best supplications are found in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and therefore should be used. For example, chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 41:

*"Our Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers the Day the account is established."*

But it is absolutely acceptable to supplicate for specific things as long as they are lawful.

As advised in the Holy Quran one should supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, with humility hoping for His mercy and in fear of His greatness. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 56:

*"...And invoke Him in fear and aspiration..."*

It is vital to supplicate with enthusiasm full well believing Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil one's needs. In addition, as advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3479, Allah, the Exalted, does not respond to someone who supplicates while heedless or distracted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3505, that when the following verse of the Holy Quran is recited the supplication is always accepted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 87:

*“...There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.”*

One should seal their supplication with the word, Ameen, as this ensures its acceptance. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 938.

After the supplication is concluded it is a practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to wipe one's hands over their face. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1492.

Finally, one should be persistent in supplicating as giving up is a hasty action which can lead to the supplication being unfulfilled. This warning is given in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3387.

One should make it a habit to remember Allah, the Exalted, in times of ease so that Allah, the Exalted, will help them in times of difficulty. This is advised in a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803. As

advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3499, Allah, the Exalted, readily accepts the supplication made after the obligatory prayers and in the last part of the night. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6321, advises that in the last part of the night the divine descent occurs at which point Allah, the Exalted, calls out and responds to supplications. There is a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 521, which advises that the supplication between the two call to prayers is never rejected. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that a Muslim is closest to Allah, the Exalted, while they are prostrating and they should therefore supplicate to Him at this time. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1138. As mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1046, there is an hour during every Friday where Allah, the Exalted, readily accepts supplications. When a fasting person breaks their fast their supplication is also accepted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1753. One should ask the sick to supplicate for them as it has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1441, that their supplications are like the supplications of the Angels. The supplication made when drinking Zamzam water is always accepted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3062. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2540, advises that the supplication at the time when it rains is accepted. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534, encourages people to supplicate for others in their absence as they are readily accepted. If one is facing any form of oppression they should supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, as they will be accepted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1905. This same Hadith advises that the supplication of the traveller is never rejected. Finally, one should encourage their parents to supplicate for them as they are readily accepted. This is supported by a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3862.

Some do not regularly supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, as they claim that He is All Aware and requires no one to inform Him of their desires. Even though, this is a fact it is better to supplicate as this is the tradition of all



the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them all, and has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

*“And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you.” Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible.”*

Supplicating is an excellent way to demonstrate one’s humility and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In fact, as mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3370, nothing is more honourable to Allah, the Exalted, than supplication. Finally, Allah, the Exalted, becomes angry when a person does not supplicate to Him as it may indicate they believe they are independent of Allah, the Exalted, which is not true. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3373.

## **The Love of Allah, the Exalted, and People**

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 78:

*“And left for him [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, favorable mention] among later generations.”*

This only occurs after one obtains the love of Allah, the Exalted, and people.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4102, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised how to obtain the love of Allah, the Exalted, and the love of people.

The love of Allah, the Exalted, is obtained when one avoids the excess of this material world which are beyond their needs. Meaning, a Muslim should strive in this world in order to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. And they should strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anything from the material world which aids one in these things is not in reality a worldly thing. Therefore, avoiding them is not required. But one must avoid those things which either

hinder or prevent them from fulfilling these duties. This is how a Muslim can keep the world in their hand and not in their heart. This is how a Muslim obtains the love of Allah, the Exalted, as this attitude causes them to strive in His obedience which attracts the love of Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

Finally, a Muslim can obtain the love of people by avoiding and desiring their worldly possessions. In reality, a person only behaves negatively towards others when they feel others actively desire their possessions or when others actively compete for the worldly things they themselves desire. Meaning, the fear of losing what one possesses and losing out on the things which they desire through competition with others can lead to negative feelings towards others. If a Muslim instead occupies themselves with acting on the first part of this Hadith it will prevent them from competing for the excess worldly things others desire as the vast majority of these desires are for unnecessary worldly things. And if a Muslim keeps their harm away from the self and possessions of others which according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, is the sign of a true believer, then they will gain the love of people also.

## **Divine Peace**

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 79:

*“Peace upon Noah among the worlds.”*

Throughout the divine scriptures there are many examples which indicate that a person shall be treated according to how they act. For example, in one verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, declares that He will remember the person who remembers Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152.

*“So remember Me; I will remember you.”*

Another example is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 40:

*“...fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me]...”*

Finally, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever shows mercy to others will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is quite obvious that people strive in this material world as they desire peace of mind and contentment. In light of the earlier discussion, peace in one's life is often achieved when a person allows others to live in peace. If one reflects on their own life they will realise that people can be split into two categories: those who mind their business and allow others to live in peace and those who do not. It does not take a genius to figure out that those who let others live in peace are the ones who gain peace. Whereas, members of the other group never find peace irrespective of how many worldly blessings they may possess. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3976, that a Muslim cannot perfect their Islam until they avoid things which do not concern them. Those who ignore this advice and busy themselves with interfering with other people are the ones who never find peace. As they deprive others of peace in turn Allah, the Exalted, deprives them of it.

Therefore, a large step towards achieving peace of mind is to let others live in peace. It is important to note, this does not mean one should abandon commanding good and forbidding evil as this is an important duty. But it means that those things which are not sinful should be left alone as constantly chiding others on issues which are not unlawful only leads to enmity and the loss of peace in peoples' lives. There was a day and age when people loved being advised by others on all lawful and unlawful matters even if this meant they were being chided as they desired to reform themselves for the better. But that day has long passed. Nowadays, most people dislike being chided over the unlawful

let alone those things which are lawful yet undesirable. So it is best to avoid this attitude if one desires to gain a bit of peace in their life.

To conclude, the one who lets others live in peace shall be granted peace by Allah, the Exalted.

## Doers of Good

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 80:

*“Indeed, We thus reward the doers of good [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him].”*

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6833, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever does a good deed will have a minimum of ten times reward.

Throughout Islamic teachings different amounts of reward have been declared for performing righteous deeds. Some teachings advise ten times reward like this Hadith, others seven hundred times and in some cases a reward which cannot be counted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 261:

*“The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills...”*

This varying reward is dependent on one's sincerity. The more sincere a person is the more they will be rewarded. Meaning, the more they perform the righteous deed for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, the more they will be rewarded. For example, the one who only acts to please Allah, the Exalted, without desiring a lawful worldly blessing will obtain more reward than the one who acts in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and seeks a lawful worldly blessing.



## Belief

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 81:

*“Indeed, he [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] was of Our believing servants.”*

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.

## **Compromising on Faith**

The next discussion is based on chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 46:

*“And [We destroyed] the people of Noah before; indeed, they were a people defiantly disobedient.”*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Help of Allah, the Exalted

The next discussion is based on chapter 54 Al Qamar, verse 10:

*“So he [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help."”*

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.

## **Building Trust in Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 54 Al Qamar, verse 13:

*“And We carried him [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] on a [construction of] planks and nails.”*

This verse mentions both aspects of trusting in Allah, the Exalted. The first is using the means Allah, the Exalted, has created and provided according to the teachings of Islam meaning, constructing the boat. The second is truly believing that the outcome of the situation which Allah, the Exalted, chooses is best even if the wisdoms behind His choice are hidden meaning, Allah, the Exalted, choosing to save the Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him.

Muslims often question how they can build up and strengthen their trust in Allah, the Exalted, especially during difficulties. One of the main ways of doing this is through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is because the one who is disobedient to Allah, the Exalted, will always believe Allah, the Exalted, will not help them which in turn weakens their trust in Him. Whereas, the obedient Muslim will firmly believe that as they have fulfilled their duties Allah, the Exalted, will definitely



respond to them in their moment of need which in turn strengthens their trust in Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, advises that Allah, the Exalted, responds to a person according to their perception of Him. The disobedient person will always have negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, because of their disobedience. Whereas, an obedient Muslim will always have positive thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, because of their obedience. This thinking can weaken or strengthen a Muslim's trust in Allah, the Exalted. The obedient Muslim trusts that if they fulfilled their side of a business contract their business partner would do the same. Similarly, an obedient Muslim trusts that as they through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, have fulfilled their duties Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil His promises by aiding them throughout their life especially, through difficulties. Whereas, the one who does not fulfil their side of a business contract would not trust or hope that their business partner will fulfil their side. Similarly, a disobedient person would not trust that Allah, the Exalted, would aid them as they failed to fulfil their duties.

To conclude, having and building trust in Allah, the Exalted, is directly linked to His obedience. The more one is obedient the more they will trust in Him. The less they are obedient they less they will trust in Him.

## Weak Faith

The next discussion is based on chapter 54 Al Qamar, verses 11-15:

*“Then We opened the gates of the heaven with rain pouring down...And We carried him [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] on a [construction of] planks and nails...And We left it as a sign, so is there any who will remember?”*

The last verse indicates the importance of gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge, such as the behaviour and outcome of the past nations, so that one obtains certainty of faith.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a Muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. 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...”*

For example, if a Muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire

the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a Muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

## Listening to Knowledge

The next discussion is based on chapter 69 Al Haqqah, verses 11-12:

*“Indeed, when the water overflowed, We carried you [i.e., your ancestors] in the sailing ship [constructed by Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him]. That We might make it for you a reminder and [that] a conscious ear would be conscious of it.”*

The last verse reminds Muslims of the importance of correctly listening and processing knowledge so that it affects their speech and behaviour.

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier yet the strength of Muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many Muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge namely, they believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of Muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some Muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for

the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

## **False Hope**

The next discussion is based on chapter 71 Nuh, verse 4:

*"[Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, said] He [i.e., Allah] will...delay you for a specified term. Indeed, the time [set by] Allah, when it comes, will not be delayed, if you only knew."*

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a Muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the

things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. 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. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach Muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:



*“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.” But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”*

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

## Being Steadfast

The next discussion is based on chapter 71 Nuh, verses 5-9:

*“He [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] said, “My Lord, indeed I invited my people [to truth] night and day...Then I invited them publicly. Then I announced to them and [also] confided to them secretly.””*

These verses remind one that being a true Muslim meaning, sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, is a 24/7 duty. One cannot pick and choose when to be a true Muslim and when to abandon it just like one picks and chooses what clothes to wear and what clothes to leave in their closet. If Muslims treat Islam like this then their faith will become nothing more than a few short practices, such as the five obligatory prayers. Their faith will become an empty shell as it will not affect or influence their speech or behaviour in their day to day activities. Therefore, a Muslim must adopt the correct mentality and ensure they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

In addition, 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.”*

## **Make things Useful**

The next discussion is based on chapter 71 Nuh, verses 10-12:

*“And [Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him] said, “Ask forgiveness of your Lord...He will...give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers.””*

These verses mean that when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and sincerely repents from the sins they commit then Allah, the Exalted, will not only provide these worldly blessings but He will give this Muslim the ability to use them in the correct way so that they benefit themselves and others in both worlds.

In reality, in most cases nothing in this material world in itself is good or bad, such as wealth. What makes a thing good or bad is the way it is used. It is important to understand that the very purpose of everything which was created by Allah, the Exalted, was for it to be used correctly according to the teachings of Islam. When something is not used correctly it in reality becomes useless. For example, wealth is useful in both worlds when it is used correctly such as being spent on the necessities of a person and their dependents. But it can become useless and even a curse for its bearer if it

is not used correctly, such as being hoarded or spent on sinful things. Simply hoarding wealth causes wealth to lose value. How can paper and metal coins one tucks away be useful? In this respect, there is no difference between a blank piece of paper and a note of money. It is only useful when it is used correctly.

So if a Muslim desires all their worldly possessions to become a blessing for them in both worlds all they have to do is use them correctly according to the teachings found in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they use them incorrectly then the same blessing will become a burden and curse for them in both worlds. It is as simple as that.

## Perception of Allah, the Exalted

The next discussion is based on chapter 71 Nuh, verse 13:

*“[Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, said] What is [the matter] with you that you do not attribute to Allah [due] grandeur.”*

In a divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He acts and treats His servant according to their perception of Him. This means if a Muslim has good thoughts and expects good from Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will not disappoint them. Similarly, if a person harbours negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, such as believing they will not be forgiven then Allah, the Exalted, may act according to their belief.

It is important to note, there is a vast difference between true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which this Hadith refers to and wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is when one fails to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them. This is not true hope it is merely wishful thinking. This is like a farmer who fails to plant any seeds, fails to water their crop and still hopes to reap a large harvest. True hope is when one strives to obey Allah, the Exalted, and whenever they slip up they sincerely repent and then hope for the



mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. This is like a farmer who plants seeds, waters their crop, dedicates effort to keeping the crop healthy and then hopes for a large harvest. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has summarised this explanation in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Generally speaking, a Muslim should harbour more fear of Allah, the Exalted, during their life as it prevents sins which is superior to hope which inspires one to perform righteous deeds especially, the voluntary type. But during periods of illness and difficulty and especially at the time of death a Muslim should have nothing but hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, even if they have spent their life disobeying Him as this has specifically been commanded by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2877.

## The Questions

The next discussion is based on chapter 71 Nuh, verses 17-18:

*“[Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, said] And Allah has caused you to grow from the earth a [progressive] growth. Then He will return you into it...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3120, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person will be asked three questions in the grave.

The first question will be who is your Lord? In order to answer this question correctly a Muslim must not only believe in Allah, the Exalted, but prove this belief through actions. This is only achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing His decrees with patience. It is this very proof which will support a Muslim in their grave when they encounter this question. It is important to note, that even some non-Muslims believe in Allah, the Exalted, yet they will fail to answer this question correctly as they did not obey Him correctly during their lives. If only believing in Him was enough then these non-Muslims would succeed in this question. But it is quite evident they will not succeed.

The next question will be what is your religion? If a Muslim desires to answer this correctly they must not only believe in Islam but practically implement its teachings in their everyday life. This involves sincerely striving to obtain and act on its teachings. It is the reason gaining useful knowledge has been made a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

The final question according to this Hadith will be who is your Prophet? It is important to note, that even some of the past nations believed in their Prophets, peace be upon them, but as they did not follow in their footsteps correctly they will fail in answering this question correctly. If a Muslim desires to answer this question correctly they must not only verbally declare their belief in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but actively learn and act on his traditions. This is the very purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, meaning, to practically follow them. 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.”*

The mercy, love and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, which will help a Muslim answer this question correctly is only possible to obtain through this method. 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. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.””*

## Joining the Righteous

The next discussion is based on chapter 71 Nuh, verse 21:

*“Noah said, “My Lord, indeed they have disobeyed me and followed him whose wealth and children will not increase him except in loss.””*

This verse indicates the importance of good companionship and warns against bad companionship. In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person who imitates a people is counted as one of them.

All Muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly warns that a Muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

But those who verbally declare their love for the righteous and fail to imitate them and instead imitate the characteristics found in hypocrites and the sinful will be considered and judged as one of them. This does not mean they will lose their faith but it means they will be judged as disobedient Muslims. How can a disobedient Muslim be counted as an obedient Muslim and end up with the righteous? This is only wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 20:

*“Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise. The companions of Paradise - they are the attainers [of success].”*

## Evil Plots

The next discussion is based on chapter 71 Nuh, verse 22:

*“[Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, said] And they conspired an immense conspiracy.”*

One should never plot to do an evil thing as it will always, one way or another, backfire on them. Even if these consequences are delayed to the next world they will face them eventually. For example, the brothers of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, desired to harm him as they desired the love, respect and affection of their father the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him. But it is clear that their scheming only put them further away from their desire. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 18:

*“And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, “Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting...”*

The more one plots evil the more Allah, the Exalted, will put them further from their goal. Even if they outwardly achieve their desire Allah, the

Exalted, will cause the very thing they desired to become a curse for them in both worlds unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then do they await except the way [i.e., fate] of the former peoples?...”*



## Guiding Others

The next discussion is based on chapter 71 Nuh, verses 21-24:

*“Noah said, “My Lord, indeed they have disobeyed me...And already they have misled many...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who guides others to something good will receive the same reward as those who act on their advice. And those who guide others to sins will be held accountable as if they committed the sins.

It is important for Muslims to be careful when advising and guiding others. A Muslim should only advise others in matters of good so that they gain reward from it and avoid advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. A person will not escape punishment on Judgment Day by simply claiming they are only inviting others towards sins even if they did not commit the sins themselves. Allah, the Exalted, will hold both the guide and the follower accountable for their actions. Muslims should therefore only advise others to do the things they would do themselves. If they dislike an action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

Because of this Islamic principle Muslims should ensure they gain the adequate knowledge before advising others as they can easily multiply their own sins if they incorrectly advise others.

In addition, this principle is an extremely easy way for Muslims to gain reward for actions they cannot perform themselves due to a lack of means, such as wealth. For example, a person who is not financially able to donate charity can encourage others to do so and this will result in them gaining the same reward as the one who gave charity.

## **A Special Deed**

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1714, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, fasted every day except for the two Eids.

In a Divine Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2219, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that all righteous deeds people perform are for themselves except for fasting as this is for Allah, the Exalted, and He shall reward it directly.

This Hadith indicates the uniqueness of fasting. One of the reasons it is described in this manner is because all other righteous deeds are visible to people, such as the prayer, or they are between people, such as secret charity. Whereas, fasting is a unique righteous deed as others cannot know someone is fasting by only observing them.

In addition, fasting is a righteous deed which puts a lock on every aspect of oneself. Meaning, a person who fasts correctly will be prevented from committing verbal and physical sins, such as looking at and hearing unlawful things. This is also achieved through the prayer but the prayer is only performed for a short time and is visible to others whereas, fasting occurs throughout the day and is invisible to others. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

*“...Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing...”*

It is clear from the following verse a person who does not complete the obligatory fasts without a valid reason will not be a true believer as the two have been directly connected. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 183:

*“O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous”*

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 723, that if a Muslim does not complete a single obligatory fast without a valid reason they cannot make up for the reward and blessings lost even if they fasted every day for their entire life.

In addition, as indicated by the verse quoted earlier fasting correctly leads to piety. Meaning, simply starving during the day does not lead to piety but paying extra attention to abstaining from sins and performing righteous deeds during the fast will lead to piety. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 707, warns that a fast will not be significant if one does not abstain from speaking and acting on falsehood. A similar Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1690, warns that some fasting people obtain nothing except hunger. When one becomes more aware and careful in obeying Allah, the Exalted, while they are fasting this habit

will eventually affect them so they behave in a similar way even when they are not fasting. This is in fact true piety.

The righteousness mentioned in the verse quoted earlier is connected to fasting as fasting reduces one's evil desires and passions. It prevents pride and the encouragement of sins. This is because fasting hinders the appetite of the stomach and one's carnal desires. These two things lead to many sins. In addition, the desire for these two things is greater than the desire for other unlawful things. So whoever controls them through fasting will find it easier to control the weaker evil desires. This leads to true righteousness.

As briefly indicated earlier there are different levels of fasting. The first and lowest level of fasting is when one abstains from the things which will break their fast, such as food. The next level is abstaining from sins which damages one's fast thereby reducing the reward of their fast, such as lying. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2235. Fasting which involves each member of the body is the next level. This is when each body part fasts from sins for example, the eyes from looking at the unlawful, the ears from listening to the unlawful and so on. The next level is when one behaves in this manner even when they are not fasting. Finally, the highest level of fasting is abstaining from all things which are not connected to Allah, the Exalted.

A Muslim should also fast inwardly as their body fasts outwardly by abstaining from sinful or vain thoughts. They should fast from persisting on their own plans in respect to their desires and try to concentrate on fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. In addition, they should fast from inwardly challenging the decree of Allah, the Exalted, and instead

except destiny and whatever it brings knowing Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind these choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Finally, a Muslim should aim for the highest reward by keeping their fast a secret and not informing others if it is avoidable as informing others unnecessarily leads to a loss of reward as it is an aspect of showing off.

## Overcoming Trials

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3337, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against the trial of the Anti-Christ and added that the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, also warned his nation about him.

The trial of the Anti-Christ has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4077, as the greatest trial Muslims will face during their lives on Earth. Therefore, Muslims should learn some important lessons from this future event. The first is the importance of possessing strong faith. Only those who possess weak faith will be misguided by him. Strong faith is extremely important as it is a weapon against every trial or difficulty one faces during their life. The one who possesses strong faith will always, through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, overcome every difficulty with reward and the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, as they understand the behaviour they must demonstrate in each situation. Whereas, those who possess weak faith are easily misguided and put off from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by the tests and trials they face during their life just like the people of weak faith will be misguided by the Anti-Christ. 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.”*

The best way to achieve strong faith is through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. This will allow a Muslim to understand the reason and wisdom of tests and trials. This in turn will allow them to overcome them successfully.

The other thing to learn from this great event is the importance of avoiding doubtful things. Just like a person who journeys close to a border is more likely to cross it similarly, a Muslim who is surrounded by temptations will more likely be led astray. The one who avoids places and things which tempt them towards sins will protect their faith and honour. This advice has been given in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. Muslims should therefore guard their faith by avoiding things, places and people who invite or tempt them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and ensure their dependents, such as their children do the same.



## **Holy Prophet Hud, peace be upon him**

### **One Body**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 75:

*“And to the ‘Aad [We sent] their brother Hud...”*

The Prophet Hud, peace be upon him, was referred as the brother of his nation in order to indicate the importance of unity.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the Muslim nation is like one body. If any part of the body suffers pain the rest of the body shares in its pain.

This Hadith, like many others, indicates the importance of not becoming so self-absorbed into one's own life thereby behaving as if the universe revolves around them and their problems. The Devil inspires a Muslim to focus so much on their own life and their problems that they lose focus on the bigger picture which leads to impatience and causes them to

become heedless of others thereby failing their duty in supporting others according to their means. A Muslim should always bear this in mind and strive to aid others as much as they can. This extends to beyond financial help and includes all verbal and physical help such as good and sincere advice.

Muslims should regularly observe the news and those who are in difficult situations all over the world. This will inspire them to avoid becoming self-centered and instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about themselves is lower in rank than an animal as even they care about their offspring. In fact, a Muslim should be better than animals by practically caring for others beyond their own family.

Even though a Muslim cannot remove all the problems of the world but they can play their part and help others according to their means as this is what Allah, the Exalted, commands and expects.

## Hope vs Wishful Thinking

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 65:

*“And to the ‘Aad [We sent] their brother Hud. He said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. Then will you not fear Him?"”*

It is important to note that the Prophet Hud, peace be upon him, like all the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, invited their nation to not only internally believe in Allah, the Exalted, but to also support their belief through physical actions by obeying Him. The two things mentioned in this verse namely, worshipping and fearing Allah, the Exalted, clearly indicate this.

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.

## Choosing a Different Path

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 66:

*"Said the eminent ones who disbelieved among his people, "Indeed, we see you [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him] in foolishness, and indeed, we think you are of the liars.""*

It is important to understand that generally when one chooses a path which is different from the path of others, such as their relatives and friends, they will face criticism and resistance from them. In fact, the majority of criticism comes from a person's relatives. For example, when a Muslim decides to concentrate more on acting on the teachings of Islam and if it is something their family have not pursued themselves then they will face criticism from them. They will be labelled foolish and extreme by those who they believed would support them on their path. It is important for Muslims to remain steadfast on the lawful path they choose and trust in the help of Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in order to overcome these difficulties.

This is a common reaction from people for when a person chooses a different path in life from others it makes them feel as if their path is bad or evil and this is the reason the person has chosen a different path. Even though the person does not believe this but only chooses a

different path believing it is better for them yet they will still face criticism. It is the same reason all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were criticised by their people as they chose and passively invited others to a different better path.

To conclude, as long as one's path in life is lawful they should remain steadfast and not be deterred by the criticism of others. But this does not mean they should not try to improve their situation and character. It means they should not be deterred from pursuing their lawful choice according to the teachings of Islam.

## A True Believer

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 68:

*"[Prophet Hud, peace be upon him, said]...I am to you a trustworthy [faithful] adviser."*

One of the best ways of fulfilling the rights of people is by treating them exactly how one desires to be treated by others. Just like one desires to be sincerely advised by others it is important they advise others sincerely also.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13, that a person cannot become a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This does not mean a Muslim will lose their faith if they fail to adopt this characteristic. It means that a Muslim's faith will not be complete until they act on this advice. This Hadith also indicates that a Muslim will not perfect their faith until they also dislike for others what they dislike for themselves. This is supported by another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586. It advises that the Muslim nation is like one body. If one part of the body is in pain the rest of the body shares the pain. This

mutual feeling includes loving and hating for others what one loves and hates for themselves.

A Muslim can only achieve this status when their heart is free from evil traits, such as envy. These evil traits will always cause one to desire better for themselves. So in reality, this Hadith is an indication that one should purify their heart by adopting good characteristics, such as being forgiving, and eliminate evil traits, such as envy. This is only possible through learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for Muslims to understand that desiring good for others will cause them to lose out on good things. The treasury of Allah, the Exalted, has no limits so there is no need to adopt a selfish and greedy mentality.

Desiring good for others includes striving to aid others in anyway one can, such as financial or emotional support, in the same way a person would desire others to aid them in their moment of need. Therefore, this love must be shown through actions not just words. Even when a Muslim forbids evil and offers advice which contradicts the desire of others they should do so gently just like they would want others to advise them kindly.

As mentioned earlier, the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of eliminating all bad characteristics which contradict mutual



love and care, such as envy. Envy is when a person desires to possess a specific blessing which is only obtainable when it is taken away from someone else. This attitude is a direct challenge to the distribution of blessings chosen by Allah, the Exalted. This is why it is a major sin and leads to the destruction of the envier's good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903. If a Muslim must desire the lawful things others possess they should wish and supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, to grant them the same or similar thing without the other person losing the blessing. This type of jealousy is lawful and is praiseworthy in aspects of religion. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Muslims should only be jealous of a wealthy person who uses their wealth correctly. And be jealous of a knowledgeable person who uses their knowledge to benefit themselves and others.

A Muslim should not only love for others to obtain lawful worldly blessings but also for them to gain religious blessings in both worlds. In fact, when one wishes this for others it encourages them to strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This type of healthy competition is welcomed in Islam. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 26:

*“...So for this let the competitors compete.”*

This encouragement will also inspire a Muslim to assess themselves in order to find and eliminate any faults in their character. When these two

elements combine meaning, striving in sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and purifying one's character, it leads to success in both worlds.

A Muslim must therefore not only claim to love for others what they desire for themselves verbally but show it through their actions. It is hoped that the one who is concerned for others in this way will receive the concern of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930.

## **Fulfill Your Duty**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 68:

*“[Prophet Hud, peace be upon him, said]...And remember when He made you successors after the people of Noah...”*

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

In addition, this important position should remind Muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted, become angry with the Muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

## **True Gratitude**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 68:

*“[Prophet Hud, peace be upon him, said]...So remember the favors of Allah that you might succeed.”*

A Muslim must ensure they fulfill all three aspects of gratitude so that they avoid becoming a denier of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who is ungrateful in reality, scorns the One who granted them the blessings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

*“...And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.”*

The three aspects of gratitude are to internally acknowledge Allah, the Exalted, as the sole Creator and Provider of all blessings. An aspect of this is to correct one's intention so that they only perform actions to please Allah, the Exalted. The next aspect is to praise Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue. And the final and highest aspect is to practically show gratitude through one's actions by using each blessing as prescribed by Islam in order to please 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]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'”*

As true gratitude leads to an increase in blessings Muslims should fear that showing ingratitude may cause the blessings they possess to either be taken away from them or for their blessings to be used against them by becoming a burden and a curse for them in both worlds. It is important to note, even if a Muslim becomes truly grateful they will still face tests and difficulties as they are guaranteed. But if they behave in the correct way they will be guided through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and body in this world and a great reward in the hereafter.

## **Blind Following**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 70:

*“They said, "Have you [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him] come to us that we should worship Allah alone and leave what our fathers have worshipped?...”*

Muslims should not follow and adopt the customary practices of non-Muslims. The more Muslims do this the less they will follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is quite evident in this day and age as many Muslims have adopted the cultural practices of other nations which has caused them to become distant from the teachings of Islam. For example, one only needs to observe the modern Muslim wedding to observe how many non-Muslim cultural practices have been adopted by Muslims. What makes this worse is that many Muslims cannot differentiate between Islamic practices based on the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Because of this non-Muslims cannot differentiate between them either which has caused great problems for Islam. For example, honour killings is a cultural practice which has nothing to do with Islam yet because of the ignorance of Muslims and their habit of adopting non-Muslim cultural practices Islam is blamed every time an honour killing occurs in society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, removed the social barriers in the form of casts and brotherhoods in order to unite people yet ignorant Muslims have resurrected them by adopting the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Simply put, the more

cultural practices Muslims adopt the less they will act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.



## **Real Love in Companionship**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 72:

*“So We saved him [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him] and those with him...”*

Muslims should note that a major sign of true love in companionship is when one directs their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is because obedience leads to success and safety in both this world and in the hereafter. A person who does not desire safety and success for a person can never truly love them irrespective of what they claim or how they treat the other person. The same way a person becomes happy when their beloved obtains worldly success, like a job, they will also desire their beloved to obtain success in the hereafter. If a person does not care about another obtaining safety and success especially, in the next world then they do not love them.

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah,

the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

Therefore, a Muslim should assess whether those in their life direct them towards Allah, the Exalted, or not. If they do then it is a clear sign of their love for them. If they do not then it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

*“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”*

## Avoiding Bitterness

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 51:

*“[Prophet Hud, peace be upon him, said] O my people, I do not ask you for it [i.e., my advice] any reward. My reward is only from the one who created me.”*

It is important for Muslims to fulfil the rights people have over them, such as their parents, according to the teachings of Islam. But they should not do this for the sake of people nor should they go overboard in their duties by crossing the limits set by Allah, the Exalted. One should instead act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and stay within the limits set by Him when fulfilling their duties to others. For example, they should not disobey Allah, the Exalted, in the process of pleasing people. The problem with dedicating one's life and efforts to people, even if no sins are committed, is that a day will certainly come when this person will realise that they dedicated so much effort to people but in return obtained nothing significant from them, such as gratitude. This attitude leads to bitterness towards life and people. If one persists on this attitude they will eventually fail in their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and especially those duties towards people. On the other hand when one acts for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how little gratitude people show them they will not become bitter as they acted for and hope reward from Allah, the Exalted. If one's intention is sincere this will prevent bitterness as they seek payback for their efforts from Allah, the Exalted, not people. People might let them down through a lack of gratitude whereas Allah, the Exalted, will reward them beyond their expectations.

## **Attracting Attention**

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 53:

*“They said, “O Hud, you have not brought us clear evidence...”*

It is important for Muslims especially, in this day and age to understand the difference between those who discuss certain topics which may be considered controversial in order to genuinely benefit people through a positive change and those who simply discuss these issues in order to attract the attention of others. Those who desire a positive change in society will always show respect and good character towards others especially, to those they are challenging through their words. They never result to vulgar language or actions in order to declare their point of view. They instead study and understand the subject they are debating about without misinterpreting or falsifying information in order to support their point of view. Their criticism is always constructive and their genuine and sincere intention to improve the society is shown through their behaviour and words. These are the people who Muslims should pay attention to as if they are correct it will improve society for everyone. But if their viewpoint is wrong they will accept the truth when it is made clear to them by others. But those who behave opposite to this correct attitude, whether they are found in the media or anywhere else, should simply be ignored as they do not desire to improve the lives of people. They are starved for attention and like an infant act out in order to attract some attention from others. Muslims should not circulate and pass on videos or other content which are linked to people like this as they are playing right into their hands and giving them the attention they so badly desire. Debating with these people is a complete waste of time because

of their evil intention and behaviour. Muslims should instead place their efforts in other useful places which benefit them and others in both worlds.

## Omens

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 54:

*“We only say that some of our gods have possessed you [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him] with evil...”*

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 909, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against paying attention to bad omens as behaving in this manner is like associating something to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, polytheism. Instead one should rely on Allah, the Exalted, to remove any evil from them.

Paying attention to evil omens means that it affects one's behaviour and actions. Even though black magic and the evil eye is real it is important to understand that nothing in the universe from the fluttering of a leaf to the sun rising occurs without the choice and will of Allah, the Exalted. And if the entire creation tried to make something happen such as harming someone they would not be able to achieve it if Allah, the Exalted, did not allow it to occur. Similarly, if the entire creation desired to provide someone with benefit they would not be able to unless Allah, the Exalted, so willed. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. Therefore, a Muslim should remain steadfast by not bothering with evil omens or fearing witches and wizards as they cannot cause something which Allah, the Exalted, has not willed from

occurring. Instead, one should remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions, facing destiny with patience and continue with their lawful actions and choices and only seek protection from evil things according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while fully trusting in the support of Allah, the Exalted. They should not turn to people and things which contradict this as in the long run it will only lead to paranoia and trouble which in most cases is worse than their initial fear.

## How to Win

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 55:

*“[Prophet Hud, peace be upon him, said]...So plot against me all together; then do not give me respite.”*

It is important for Muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a Muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A Muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:



*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice Muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

## **Relying on Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 56:

*“[Prophet Hud, peace be upon him, said] Indeed, I have relied upon Allah, my Lord...”*

True trust in Allah, the Exalted, is composed of two elements. The first is using the lawful means one has been provided by Allah, the Exalted. The second element is to trust that the outcome which Allah, the Exalted, chooses will be best even if a person does not immediately observe the wisdom behind it. Muslims should never be extreme and adopt one aspect without the other. Using the means is an aspect of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, as the means were created and provided by none other than Him. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised someone in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2517, to use the means they possessed by tying up their camel but to also trust that Allah, the Exalted, would safeguard the camel.

Going on social benefits and claiming trust in Allah, the Exalted, is not according to the teachings of Islam. Those who behave in such a manner do not trust Allah, the Exalted, only the government. This behaviour is only acceptable if a person is rightfully entitled to social benefits. A Muslim must use their means such as their physical strength

and then trust Allah, the Exalted, will provide and choose the best thing for them in all cases.

## Divine Power

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 56:

*“[Prophet Hud, peace be upon him, said]...There is no creature but that He [Allah, the Exalted] holds it by its forelock [i.e., controls it]...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, there are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But there are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

*“Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”*

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a Muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond

only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so Muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

## **Advise Others Differently**

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 57:

*“But if you turn away, then I have already conveyed that with which I was sent to you...”*

Even though commanding good and forbidding evil is an important duty on each Muslim yet they will encounter people who do not seem to listen nor act on the advice given to them. This is quite obvious especially in this day and age. In cases like this it is best not to give up but to consider changing one's technique. Advising others through words is one way of commanding good and forbidding evil but a better way is to advise others through one's actions. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the greatest teacher as he advised others through his words and actions. This leading by example technique is important to adopt as it is more likely to affect others in a positive way. But those who still fail to accept this technique of commanding good and forbidding evil should be left alone. One should continue showing a practical example but perhaps take a step back from verbally advising them as continuously advising others who do not pay attention can cause both parties to become irritated and angered. This contradicts the very attitude a Muslim should possess when they advise others towards good. It is a sad truth that one should not bother verbally imposing themselves on people who do not care what they have to say. But they should continue advising others through their actions. In this way one not only helps themselves by refining their own character but also fulfills their duty in commanding good and forbidding evil. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 17:

*“...enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.”*



## A Good Life

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verses 59-60:

*“And that was ‘Aad, who rejected the signs of their Lord and disobeyed His messengers and followed the order of every obstinate tyrant. And they were [therefore] followed in this world with a curse...then away with ‘Aad, the people of Hud.”*

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.

## Trustworthy

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 125:

*“[Prophet Hud, peace be upon him, said]...Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy messenger.”*

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.

## **Buildings**

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 128:

*"[Prophet Hud, peace be upon him, said] How can you be so vain that you set up monuments on every high place?"*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2482, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that all lawful spending gains reward from Allah, the Exalted, except the wealth which is spent on buildings.

This includes all spending on lawful things which is free from excessiveness, waste or extravagance. Spending on construction which is necessary is not included in this Hadith but the construction which is beyond one's needs is. This is disliked as spending on construction easily leads to waste and extravagance. In addition, the one who spends wealth on construction is less likely to donate charity and spend in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Also this behavior often leads a Muslim to adopt hopes for a long life as the one who believes their stay in this world is extremely short will not waste energy and wealth on constructing a beautiful home. The greater one's hope for a long life the less righteous deeds they will perform believing they can always perform good deeds in the future. It also causes one to delay sincere repentance believing they can always change for the better in the future. Finally, it

causes one to dedicate more efforts to the world in order to create a more comfortable life for their supposed long stay in this world.

Actively taking part in unnecessary construction occupies one's time which prevents them from performing voluntary righteous deeds, such as fasting and the voluntary night prayer out of extreme fatigue. It also prevents them from striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge.

Finally, in reality taking part in unnecessary construction never ends. Meaning, the moment a person completes one part of their home they move to the next until the cycle repeats itself.

Therefore, Muslims should adhere to what is within their necessity in respect to all things not just construction so that they can avoid these negative consequences.

## The Eternal Home

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 129:

*“[Prophet Hud, peace be upon him, said] And take for yourselves constructions [i.e., palaces and fortresses] that you might abide eternally?”*

When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing. Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim they stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that they stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how Muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much

effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, Muslims do not treat it like one. Instead, they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some Muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.



## What is Cursed?

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 132-134:

*“[Prophet Hud, peace be upon him, said] And fear He who provided you with that which you know. Provided you with grazing livestock and children. And gardens and springs.”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that everything in this material world is cursed except the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, what is connected to it, the knowledgeable person and the student of knowledge.

The remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, encompasses all the levels of remembrance. Namely, internal silent remembrance, which includes correcting one's intention so that they only act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Remembering Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue and the most important is practically remembering Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Anything which leads to the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, includes the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, such as striving in the material world in order to fulfill one's necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. In reality, this includes any action which appears worldly or religious as long as it involves the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

Both the knowledgeable person and the student of knowledge are the only people in reality who will obey Allah, the Exalted, correctly as this is not possible to achieve without knowledge. An ignorant person disobeys Allah, the Exalted, without even realizing it as they are unaware of what counts as a sin or a righteous deed. In some cases, one may even believe they are strictly obeying Him even though they are far from it.

To conclude, in reality nothing is really cursed in the material world in itself. It is how a thing is used which determines if it is cursed or not. For example, if wealth is used correctly according to the teachings of Islam then it is a great blessing in both worlds. But if it is misused or hoarded then it will become a curse for its owner in both worlds. This can be applied to all things in this world.

## Understanding the Limits

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 136-138:

*“They said, “It is all the same to us whether you [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him] advise or are not of the advisors. This is not but the custom of the former peoples. And we are not to be punished.””*

The Holy Quran teaches mankind that certain people are so drowned in the material world no advice will penetrate their veiled hearts. The Holy Quran describes how this group of people possesses hearts harder than rocks. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

*“Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder...”*

At this point those who desire to spread the word of Islam should separate from this type of person and instead concentrate on others. But it is important to note, even in this case a Muslim should always demonstrate good character towards the sinful as they can repent at anytime. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

*“...and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace.”*

Similarly, in another verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that when a limit is reached it is best to separate and leave the stubborn and misguided people to their false beliefs. A day will undoubtedly come when Allah, the Exalted, will inform mankind who was rightly guided and who was lost in darkness. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 55:

*“And when they hear ill speech, they turn away from it and say, "For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. Peace will be upon you; we seek not the ignorant.””*

Muslims should never get depressed and confused when their good advice does not affect others. In some cases, these people are drowned in sins to such an extent their heart becomes veiled. This veil prevents the good advice affecting them in a positive way. A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, explains how a sin causes a black spot to be etched onto the spiritual heart. The more one sins the more their spiritual heart becomes engrossed by this darkness. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

*“No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning.”*

This is similar to another verse where Allah, the Exalted, declares that their ears, eyes and hearts have been veiled from the truth and they therefore cannot be guided to the truth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 7:

*“Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil...”*

The fault does not lie with the message of Islam but in the hearts of the misguided. Just like the fault lies in the eyes of a blind person and not the bright Sun. Unfortunately, this stubborn attitude has become a widespread problem within society. Some of these people believe in Islam yet have closed their hearts and minds to the teachings of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They refuse to accept any good advice which would benefit them in both worlds.

Those who choose to spread the word of Islam should understand that there are two types of mind-sets people can adopt. The first is when someone makes their mind up beforehand about an issue and then searches and accepts only those things which support their predetermined belief. Whereas, the correct attitude is to live with an open mind by searching and accepting strong evidence regarding different issues. The first mentality will only cause problems from a personal level right up to a national level. Unfortunately, this is how some aspects of the media work. They predetermine the information they would like to publish, find bits of weak supporting evidence and then blow it out of proportion for the world to see. Those spreading the

word of Islam should avoid the first type of people and instead concentrate on inviting the second group towards the truth.

## **Hasten to Actions**

The next discussion is based on chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 15:

*“As for ‘Aad, [the nation of Prophet Hud, peace be upon him] they were arrogant upon the earth without right and said, "Who is greater than us in strength?" Did they not consider that Allah who created them was greater than them in strength?...”*

This verse reminds Muslims that instead of boasting about the blessings one possesses, such as one’s physical and mental strength, they should instead use them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, before they lose them.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2306, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to hasten in performing righteous deeds before seven things occur.

One of the things mentioned which prevents righteous actions is a debilitating sickness. This is a warning to make use of one's good health before they encounter sickness. One should observe those who have lost their good health either through sickness or through ageing and therefore make use of the good health they possess by striving to gain success in lawful worldly matters as well as religious matters while giving

priority to religion over the world. For example, a Muslim should use their good health to journey to the Mosques regularly in order to offer their obligatory prayers with congregation before a time comes when they desire to do this but do not possess the physical strength to do so. The amazing thing about utilizing one's good health correctly is that when a Muslim eventually loses it Allah, the Exalted, will continue to grant them the same reward they used to receive when doing good deeds during their time of good health. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. But those who live in heedlessness fail to utilise their good health and therefore receive no reward during their good health or when they fall ill.

This is connected to the next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion namely, senility. A Muslim should make use of their youth and strong intelligence before they reach senility. This includes gaining and acting on knowledge and using one's mental strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It is important to behave in this manner before senility occurs as even the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sought refuge from senility in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6390.



## Listening Correctly

The next discussion is based on chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 26:

*“And We had certainly established them [Aad - the nation of Prophet Hud, peace be upon him] in such as We have not established you, and We made for them hearing...But their hearing...availed them not from anything [of the punishment]...”*

Even though the amount of Islamic scholars, lecturers and Islamic educational material has increased over time yet, the strength of Muslims has only decreased. There are many factors for this. One of the main reasons is that the intention of the listeners is not correct. They attend lectures not for sake of Allah, the Exalted, and changing for the better instead many only attend lectures searching for a spiritual high just like a music concert. They seek entertainment not reformation. They please themselves by claiming they are working hard in order to act on Islamic teachings by attending many events and gatherings yet, because of their attitude they do not change for the better by acting on the lessons they have heard. They believe merely listening is good enough to please Allah, the Exalted, and to succeed. It is why some attend lectures for decades yet do not change at all for the better.

## Correct Perception

The next discussion is based on chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 26:

*“And We had certainly established them [Aad - the nation of Prophet Hud, peace be upon him] in such as We have not established you, and We made for them...vision...But their...vision...availed them not from anything [of the punishment]...”*

In order to avoid the mistakes of the past nations Muslims must adopt the correct perception in this world.

It is important for Muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no

longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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...”*

## **A Hard Spiritual Heart**

The next discussion is based on chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 26:

*“And We had certainly established them [Aad - the nation of Prophet Hud, peace be upon him] in such as We have not established you, and We made for them...hearts. But their...hearts availed them not from anything [of the punishment]...”*

In order to avoid the mistakes of the past nations Muslims must avoid adopting a corrupt and hard spiritual heart.

The corruption and hardness of the spiritual heart is an extremely important matter which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that when the spiritual heart becomes corrupt then the whole body becomes corrupt. This corruption is then reflected in one's speech and actions. Similarly, the Holy Quran has highlighted the importance of a soft and sound heart by advising that one will not derive benefit from their possessions or relatives on Judgment Day unless they possess a sound spiritual heart. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

*“The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart.”*

The one with a hard spiritual heart can be described as a person who rejects the truth when it is presented to them believing they are superior in knowledge. They lack submission and the fear of Allah, the Exalted, which leads to abandoning good deeds, committing sins, excessive love and striving for the material world while remaining heedless to preparing for the eternal hereafter. The hard hearted are easily influenced by the Devil into committing sins and rejecting good deeds. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 53:

*“[That is] so He may make what Satan throws in [i.e., asserts] a trial for those within whose hearts is disease and those hard of heart...”*

Two specific blameworthy characteristics are adopted by the one who possesses a hard spiritual heart. They intentionally misinterpret divine scriptures in order to fulfil their own desires such as obtaining fame. They criticise those who strive to adhere to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they desire people to follow their thinking and love for the material world. The second is that they cherry pick verses and Hadiths which suit their desires. They label those who strive to adopt and act on all verses and Hadiths as extremists thereby making their own attitude seem pleasing to others. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 13:

*“So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened. They distort words from their [proper] places [i.e., usages] and have forgotten a portion of that of which they were reminded. And you will still observe deceit among them, except a few of them...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned that those who talk excessively without mentioning Allah, the Exalted, are prone to adopting a spiritual hard heart. The one who possesses a hard spiritual heart is furthest from Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2411.

As mentioned earlier those who abandon the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, will be cursed with a hard heart. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 13:

*“So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who laughs excessively will become hard hearted. It is important to understand this does not mean one cannot smile as this has been classified as an act of charity by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1970. Laughing excessively causes one to adopt a

mentality whereby they only discuss funny issues. This causes one to avoid serious issues such as death and Judgment Day. If one avoids these important issues how can they prepare for them? A lack of preparation will lead to one's spiritual heart becoming hard.

Some say over eating can cause hardness of the spiritual heart. This is because over eating causes one to become lazy. Laziness leads to a reduction in good deeds which can cause the spiritual heart to become hard.

As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334, when a person sins a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. If the number of sins increases then this blackness increases which leads to a hard spiritual heart. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

*“No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning.”*

This is why it has been said persistently sinning can cause the spiritual heart to die.

It is important for Muslims to strive to soften their heart as it leads to its purification. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, when the spiritual heart is purified all the limbs of the body become purified also. This purification will encourage one to perform righteous deeds and abandon sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.



## **Your Legacy**

The next discussion is based on chapter 69 Al Haqqah, verses 6-8:

*“And as for ‘Aad [the nation of Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], they were destroyed by a screaming, violent wind...Then do you see of them any remains?”*

First of all, it is important to understand worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example is the great empire of Pharaoh. Islam not only teaches Muslims to send blessings ahead of them to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds but it also teaches them to leave a lovely legacy behind from which people can benefit from. In fact, when a Muslim passes away and leaves behind anything which is useful, such as an ongoing charity in the form of a water well they will be rewarded for it. This is confirmed in Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4223. So a Muslim should strive to perform righteous deeds and send forward as much good as possible but they should also try leaving a good legacy behind which will benefit them after they pass away.

Unfortunately, many Muslims are so concerned about their wealth and properties that they only end up leaving them behind which does not

benefit them in the least. Each Muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for creating a legacy for themselves as the moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly. Today is the day a Muslim should truly reflect on the legacy they will leave behind. If this legacy is good and beneficial they should praise Allah, the Exalted, for granting them the strength to do so. But if it is something which will not benefit them then they should prepare something which will so that they not only send forward good to the hereafter but also leave good behind. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. So each Muslim should ask themselves what is their legacy?

## **A Sign of Sincerity**

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3852, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, supplicated for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, on the Holy Prophet Hud, peace be upon him.

Desiring for the mercy and blessings of Allah, the Exalted, on others is a sign of having sincerity to them.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themselves.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themselves in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

*“...Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them...”*

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

*“...And do good as Allah has done good to you...”*

## **Holy Prophet Salih, peace be upon him**

### **Following Clear Proof**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 73:

*“And to the Thamud [We sent] their brother Salih. He said, “O my people...There has come to you clear evidence from your Lord. This is the she-camel of Allah [sent] to you as a sign. So leave her to eat within Allah’s land and do not touch her with harm, lest there seize you a painful punishment.”*

In this age, the two greatest proofs of Allah, the Exalted, are the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If Muslims fail to sincerely obey and follow them then they may well face punishment just like the past nations did who failed to respect, follow and obey the proofs given to them.

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

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

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

*"And indeed, you are of a great moral character."*

It includes to accept his commands and prohibitions at all times. This has been made a duty by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

*"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."*

Sincerity includes to give priority to his traditions over the actions of anyone else as all paths to Allah, the Exalted, are closed except the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

*"Say, [O Muḥammad], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."*

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective, of one's relationship with these people. This is all summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words.



## Successors

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 74:

*“[Prophet Salih, peace be upon him, said] And remember when He made you successors after the ‘Aad and settled you in the land...”*

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

In addition, this important position should remind Muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted, become angry with the Muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

## **Cure for Corruption**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 74:

*“[Prophet Salih, peace be upon him, said]...Then remember the favors of Allah and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption.”*

One of the reasons corruption spreads throughout society to the point that even top government officials are involved occurs after the general public becomes corrupt. When ordinary people mistreat others, through physical or financial means thereby disobeying Allah, the Exalted, believing no one can hold them accountable, then as a punishment Allah, the Exalted, appoints them corrupt leaders and government officials. Meaning, how one acts is how they are treated. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, that when the general public cheat each other financially Allah, the Exalted, punishes them by appointing them oppressive leaders. One aspect of this oppression is corruption which causes the general public great distress. The same Hadith warns that when the general public break their covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then they will be overpowered by their enemies who will confiscate their wealth and property. Again, this is an aspect of corruption where people of influence, such as government officials, freely take the belongings of others without any fear of the consequences.

When the general public becomes corrupt then their leaders and other people in influential social positions are inspired to act in the same way believing that this behaviour is accepted by the general public. This leads to corruption on a national level. But if the general public obeyed Allah, the Exalted, by not mistreating others through corruption then their leaders and those in an influential social position would not dare act in a corrupt way full well knowing the general public would not stand for it. And according to the Hadith quoted earlier, if the general public remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, He would protect them from corrupt officials by appointing people into influential positions who are just in their affairs.

Instead of taking the immature path of blaming others for the widespread corruption Muslims should truly reflect on their own behaviour and if necessary adjust their attitude otherwise corruption in society will only increase with time. No one should believe that as they are not in an influential social position they have no effect on the corruption which occurs in society. As proven by this discussion corruption occurs because of the behaviour of the general public and it therefore can only be removed by the good behaviour of the general public. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

*“...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...”*

## Changes with Time

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 79:

*“And he [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] turned away from them and said, “O my people, I...advised you, but you do not like advisors.””*

If one studies the lives of the righteous predecessors they will observe many differences between them and the Muslims of today. One big difference is the way people respond to those who command good and forbid evil, which is a duty on all Muslims according to their knowledge. It is important for Muslims to understand this behavioural change as it can prevent many arguments and enmity growing between people. In the past Muslims loved those who advised them to do good and warned them against bad things. In fact, they did not consider someone a sincere friend until they behaved in this manner with them. They actually even loved those who advised them on things which were not considered sins in Islam but were only disliked things. This is the major change which has occurred. Many Muslims nowadays dislike being constructively criticized in this manner. In cases where unlawful things are occurring it is a duty on a Muslim to gently and kindly warn against it according to the teachings of Islam even if others dislike their behaviour. But in most cases where others are not committing a sin but are merely committing things which are disliked it is better for a Muslim not to criticize them over them as it will only lead to enmity, arguments and it can even cause one to give up advising others because of the negative response they receive. The exception is when the one being advised likes being advised in such a manner. Therefore, a Muslim who desires to fulfil their duty and avoid arguments with others should command

good and warn against the unlawful but leave aside things which do not fall within these two categories.

## Obtaining Happiness

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 62:

*“They said, “O Salih, you were among us a man of promise before this...””*

This means they had high hopes that the Holy Prophet Salih, peace be upon him, would live up to their lowly worldly expectations. But he instead challenged their evil lifestyle and paid no heed to their expectations and instead fulfilled his duty as the Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, of Allah, the Exalted.

Many people set the standards for their happiness according to the rules and desires of other people. The problem with this mentality is that one will become sad or happy depending on the desires of people. If they persist on this attitude than they reach a level where they love, hate, give, withhold and act according to the desires of people. This attitude will only lead to overall sadness in one's life as truly pleasing others is unattainable. People are not pleased with Allah, the Exalted, when He granted them countless blessings how can they possibly be pleased with people who innately gave them nothing? So living with the attitude of always aiming to please others will only result in sadness.

A Muslim should therefore strive to obtain the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, which is easily obtainable. This person will love, hate, give and withhold for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This is only achieved through sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This will lead to true happiness in both worlds and therefore it is the key to happiness.



## **Blind Imitation**

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 62:

*“...Do you [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] forbid us to worship what our fathers worshipped?...”*

These people made the mistake of blindly imitating their relatives instead of using the knowledge and understanding Allah, the Exalted, had granted them.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

*“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”*

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five daily obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.

## The Right Companions

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 63:

*“He [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] said, “O my people...who would protect me from Allah if I disobeyed Him? So you would not increase me except in loss.”*

This verse reminds Muslims that one should only accompany those who benefit them in both worlds.

There are countless examples in the world of how a person inspired their friend to take the wrong path in life which caused them serious trouble, such as prison. One should not only be cautious of people who possess bad characteristics as they will influence their friends in a negative way which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. But a Muslim should also be cautious over the people who seem to possess genuine love for them especially those who do not possess real knowledge. This is because the one who does not possess real knowledge will sometimes advise their loved ones incorrectly believing they have fulfilled and shown their love to their companion. For example, a wife may advise her tired husband to offer his obligatory prayer at home instead of at the Mosque with congregation. Even though according to some scholars it is permissible to offer one's obligatory prayer at home yet, this advice will only take one away from one of the greatest traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings

be upon him. This in turn will only take them further away from Allah, the Exalted. This wife may believe she has behaved in a loving way even though she has not. This is why gaining useful knowledge is extremely important and a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. This is because some things may seem difficult outwardly yet many blessings are contained within them. And many things may seem easy and even lawful yet they only take one away from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a Muslim should be cautious and remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and not get fooled by the advice a loved one gives. They should not assume the advice will benefit them just because it comes from a beloved companion.

## **An Appointed Time**

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verses 64-65:

*"[Prophet Salih, peace be upon him, said] And O my people, this is the she-camel of Allah - [she is] to you a sign. So let her feed upon Allah's earth and do not touch her with harm, or you will be taken by an impending punishment." But they hamstrung her, so he said, "Enjoy yourselves in your homes for three days. That is a promise not to be denied [i.e., unfailing]."*

The nation of the Holy Prophet Salih, peace be upon him, Thamud, were given an appointed time for their punishment. Similarly, the entire mankind have an appointed time which is inescapable namely, death. Therefore, Muslims must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in order to prepare for their appointed time.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that there are two blessings people often do not appreciate until they lose them namely, good health and free time.

Everything in this material can be bought, even through illegal means, except time. Once it passes it does not return. Even though this reality is

not denied by anyone irrespective of their faith yet, many Muslims do not appreciate and make good use of the time they have been given. Many have adopted the mentality that they will prepare for the hereafter tomorrow. But as each day passes this tomorrow keeps getting delayed until, in many cases, this tomorrow never comes. And they only realise this tomorrow when it is too late meaning, at the time of their death. Those who are fortunate enough to reach this tomorrow during their lives may inhabit the Mosques when they reach elderly age but as they have dedicated so much time and energy to the material world their bodies might be in Mosques yet, their hearts and tongues are still engrossed in the material world. This is obvious to those who regularly attend Mosques. These Muslims are unlikely to learn and act on Islamic teachings because of their elderly age and their worldly mentalities.

In addition, with the passing of time, in most cases, one's responsibilities only increase such as marriage and raising children. So delaying preparing for the hereafter until one is supposedly more free is simply foolish. Islam does not teach Muslims to abandon the world but it does encourage them to make correct use of their time by taking enough from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities without extravagance or waste and then dedicate the rest of their efforts to preparing for the permanent hereafter. This is how one uses their time correctly. How many Muslims can honestly say they dedicate the majority of their efforts to preparing for the hereafter over beautifying their temporal world?

## What is Good and Bad

The next discussion is based on chapter 15 Al Hijr, verses 83-84:

*“But the shriek seized them [Thamud – the nation of the Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] at early morning. So nothing availed them [from] what they used to earn.”*

It is important for Muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, Muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient.” And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves.”*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a Muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. 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.”*



## Temporary Home

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 146-148:

*“[Prophet Salih, peace be upon him, said] Will you be left in what is here, secure [from death]. Within gardens and springs. And fields of crops and palm trees with softened fruit?”*

It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of the material world. Unfortunately, Muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared.

It is important for Muslims to understand that no matter how long they live life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A Muslim only fails preparing for the hereafter

correctly because of their pursuit of the excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities.

A Muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a Muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. 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?”*

## Balanced Spending

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 149:

*"[Prophet Salih, peace be upon him, said] And you carve out of the mountains, homes, with skill."*

The Holy Quran has labelled those who are wasteful as the siblings of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 27:

*"Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful."*

The comparison has been made to the Devil for several reasons. First of all, the people who spend wealth excessively on unnecessary things often do so in haste without thinking things through meaning, an impulse spender. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2012, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned that being hasty is from the Devil while thinking things through is from Allah, the Exalted. If a Muslim truly pondered over what they desired to purchase they would not spend on unnecessary and extravagant things as this is not a sign of a true Muslim.

In addition, when one spends on unnecessary and extravagant things especially, excessively they in most cases are only fuelling the companies who make a profit by distracting people from right guidance, such as the entertainment industry, which is the Devil's main and ultimate goal.

Spending wastefully always distracts one from preparing for the hereafter as this person dedicates much time to earning wealth, spending it wastefully and enjoying what they acquired. Distracting a Muslim from preparing for the hereafter is another goal of the Devil.

Finally, the verse quoted earlier specifically mentions the ingratitude of the Devil. In reality, the one who spends wastefully on unnecessary things does so because they too are ungrateful over what they already possess. If they possessed true gratitude it would prevent them from acting in this manner. Islam does not prohibit one from spending on necessary things in fact it encourages Muslims to do so. And even spending on unnecessary things is acceptable if it is done occasionally and without extravagance as this is something which is disliked by Allah, the Exalted, and leads to wasting wealth. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 141:

*"...And be not excessive. Indeed, He does not like those who commit excess."*

## Good Company

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 151-152:

*"[Prophet Salih, peace be upon him, said] And do not obey the order of the transgressors. Who cause corruption in the land and do not amend."*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person who imitates a people is counted as one of them.

All Muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly warns that a Muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

But those who verbally declare their love for the righteous and fail to imitate them and instead imitate the characteristics found in hypocrites

and the sinful will be considered and judged as one of them. This does not mean they will lose their faith but it means they will be judged as disobedient Muslims. How can a disobedient Muslim be counted as an obedient Muslim and end up with the righteous? This is only wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 20:

*“Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise. The companions of Paradise - they are the attainers [of success].”*

## **Corruption in the Land**

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 151-152:

*"[Prophet Salih, peace be upon him, said] And do not obey the order of the transgressors. Who cause corruption in the land and do not amend."*

An 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.

## Thinking Things Through

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 46:

*“He [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] said, “O my people, why are you impatient for evil before [i.e., instead of] good? ...”*”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2012, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking things through is from Allah, the Exalted, while being hasty is from the Devil.

This is an extremely important teaching to understand and act on as Muslims who perform much righteous deeds often destroy them through hastiness. For example, they may utter some evil words in a fit of rage which may cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

The vast majority of sins and difficulties, such as arguments, occur because people fail to think things through and instead act in a hasty way. The sign of intelligence is when one thinks before speaking or acting and only precedes when they know their speech or action is good and beneficial in worldly or religious matters.



Even though, a Muslim should not delay in performing righteous deeds yet, they should still think things through before performing them. This is because a righteous deed may receive no reward simply because its conditions and etiquettes have not been fulfilled because of one's hastiness. In this respect, one should only move forward in any matter after they have thought things through.

The one who behaves in this manner will not only minimize their sins and increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, but they will minimize the difficulties they encounter, such as arguments and disagreements, in all aspects of their life.

## Paranoia

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 47:

*“They said, “We consider you [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] a bad omen, you and those with you.”...”*

When some face difficulties instead of firstly observing themselves and their behaviour to assess whether they need to change for the better and remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, patiently waiting for relief they instead turn to uneducated and inexperienced people who claim to fix worldly things through spiritual means. These people only cause a Muslim to adopt an illness which is far worse than their initial problem namely, paranoia. These people convince Muslims that their problems have either been caused by supernatural creatures, such as jinns, or by black magic which someone has used against them. Even though jinns do exist it is very rare for them to affect people in their worldly matters. This incorrect advice causes Muslims to become severely paranoid and superstitious over petty things and it even causes them to grow suspicious over their friends and relatives. This only leads to enmity and fractured relationships. This attitude will also damage one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, as they will be advised in many cases to do things which are not advised in the Holy Quran or the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for Muslims to strengthen their faith through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. This will prevent them turning to such foolish people who cannot even fix their own problems let alone fix the problems of others. Strong faith will prevent paranoia affecting them as they will fully rely on Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. Strong faith allows a Muslim to understand that even if the entire creation desired to harm them they will not be able to do so unless Allah, the Exalted, allowed it. Similarly, the entire creation cannot benefit them unless Allah, the Exalted, wills it. And every case and situation only occurs according to a set and unchangeable plan namely, destiny. This has been advised throughout the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as the far reaching Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516.

To conclude, a Muslim when encountering a problem should firstly assess their own behaviour and rectify it if necessary and then remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and avoid further problems in the form of paranoia by avoiding people who claim to fix worldly problems in spiritual ways.

## Justice

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 48:

*“And there were [from the nation of Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] in the city nine family heads causing corruption in the land and not amending [its affairs].”*

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

## Evil Plans

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verses 49-51:

*“They said, “Take a mutual oath by Allāh that we will kill him [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] by night, he and his family. Then we will say to his executor, ‘We did not witness the destruction of his family, and indeed, we are truthful.’”...Then look how was the outcome of their plan - that We destroyed them and their people, all.”*

One should never plot to do an evil thing as it will always, one way or another, backfire on them. Even if these consequences are delayed to the next world they will face them eventually. For example, the brothers of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, desired to harm him as they desired the love, respect and affection of their father the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him. But it is clear that their scheming only put them further away from their desire. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 18:

*“And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, “Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting...”*

The more one plots evil the more Allah, the Exalted, will put them further from their goal. Even if they outwardly achieve their desire Allah, the

Exalted, will cause the very thing they desired to become a curse for them in both worlds unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then do they await except the way [i.e., fate] of the former peoples?...”*

## **All Power Belongs to Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 50:

*“And they [the nation of Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] planned a plan, and We planned a plan, while they perceived not.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, there are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But there are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

*“Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”*

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a Muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond



only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so Muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

## The Danger of Ignorance

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 52:

*“So those are their houses [the nation of Salih, peace be upon him], desolate because of the wrong they had done. Indeed in that is a sign for people who know.”*

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of

ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

## Being on Guard

The next discussion is based on chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 38:

*“And [We destroyed]...Thamud [the nation of Prophet Salih, peace be upon him]...And Satan had made pleasing to them their deeds and averted them from the path, and [even though] they were endowed with perception.”*

It is important to understand that no matter how much religious knowledge one obtains or how much worship and righteous deeds they perform they will never be safe from the attacks and traps of the Devil. This is because the Devil attacks each person according to how much knowledge they possess and how much righteous deeds they perform. For example, he will try to convince the Muslim who is strict in offering their obligatory prayers not to offer them in congregation at the Mosque or by convincing them to delay their obligatory prayers beyond their starting times as he knows he will not be able to convince them to completely abandon the obligatory prayers. Whereas, in respect to the Muslim who is struggling to establish their obligatory prayers he will attempt to convince them that they are too difficult to establish therefore they should only offer them when they are completely free. He tries to convince those who perform many voluntary righteous deeds not to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to improve their character so that they continue to destroy their good deeds through bad characteristics such as, lying and backing.

The Devil aims to prevent a person from reaching a higher level if he cannot convince them to fall in rank through disobedience to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims should always be on guard against his attacks and traps by persistently striving to increase in rank, improve their character and avoid acts of disobedience which is all achieved by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

## Worldly Knowledge

The next discussion is based on chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 38:

*“And [We destroyed]...Thamud [the nation of Prophet Salih, peace be upon him]...And Satan had made pleasing to them their deeds and averted them from the path, and [even though] they were endowed with perception [worldly knowledge].”*

It is important for Muslims to understand that their worldly knowledge irrespective of how much they possess is not enough to gain success in their religious life. Even though, gaining useful worldly knowledge is praiseworthy according to the teachings of Islam as it is an excellent means for one to obtain lawful provision for themselves and their dependents yet, it is not enough to safely guide them through their religious life. For example, in most cases, worldly knowledge will not teach someone how to safely journey through a difficulty or a test in a way which pleases Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward in both worlds. The obligatory duties and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cannot be acted on by a Muslim who only possesses worldly knowledge. In fact, religious knowledge has the power to guide one to success in both worlds whereas worldly knowledge will only aid someone in this world. The one who possesses religious knowledge will adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which will result in such blessings and grace that they will find success in both worlds. Whereas, worldly knowledge will inspire one to deduce their own path in religion instead of acting according to the teachings of the rightly guided namely, the righteous predecessors.

Religion is not to about creating one's own path it is simply to adhere to Islamic teachings.

Unfortunately, many Muslims who possess worldly knowledge do not realise this important point which only reduces their chances of achieving success in both worlds. Therefore, Muslims should strive to obtain and act on both religious and useful worldly knowledge if they desire success in both worlds. This is why gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

## Social Freedom

The next discussion is based on chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 17:

*“And as for Thamud [the nation of Prophet Salih, peace be upon him], We guided them, but they preferred blindness over guidance...”*

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

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



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

## Leniency

The next discussion is based on chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verses 43-44:

*“And in Thamud [the nation of Prophet Salih, peace be upon him], when it was said to them, "Enjoy yourselves for a time." But they were insolent toward the command of their Lord, so the thunderbolt seized them while they were looking on.”*

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The Muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a Muslim. A Muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A Muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency

by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

## Envy

The next discussion is based on chapter 54 Al Qamar, verse 25:

*“Has the message been sent down upon him [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] from among us? Rather, he is an insolent liar.”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

Envy is a serious and major sin because the envier's problem is not with another person in reality it is with Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who granted the blessing which is envied. So a person's envy only demonstrates their displeasure with the allocation and choice of Allah, the Exalted. They believe Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake when He allocated a particular blessing to another person instead of them.

Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when the envier strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing. Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feelings and strives to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing

the blessing. Even though this type is not a sin it is considered disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and praiseworthy if it is over a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first person who can be lawfully envied is the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second person who can be lawfully envied is the one who uses their knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

An envious Muslim should strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person envied such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

## Consequences of Actions

The next discussion is based on chapter 54 Al Qamar, verses 27-31:

*“Indeed, We are sending the she-camel as trial for them, so [Prophet Salih, peace be upon him] watch them and be patient...But they called their companion, and he dared and hamstrung [the camel]...Indeed, We sent upon them one shriek [i.e., blast from the sky], and they became like the dry twig fragments of an [animal] pen.”*

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A Muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a Muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and

others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

## **Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him**

### **Greatness in Difficulties**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 124:

*“And when Abraham was tried by his Lord with words [i.e., commands] and he fulfilled them. [Allah] said, "Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people.””*

Allah, the Exalted, connected the superiority of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, to overcoming tests and difficulties.

In life a Muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties than when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will



realise the majority of the events discussed involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a Muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

## **A True Leader**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 124:

*"[Allah] said, "Indeed, I will make you [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] a leader for the people."*

In the early days of Islam to attend a gathering of Islamic knowledge one had to journey for days but now countless lectures can be found online. Yet, ignorance of the correct path has only increased since the passing of the righteous predecessors. This is because some have acquired knowledge by memorizing verses of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but have not used them to purify their character. Meaning, they did not act on their knowledge. Those who act like this will lose the power to affect the hearts of others through their advice. Some lecturers are like news bulletins that only provide information without stimulating others to act thereby failing in their duty to guide others through their God given knowledge. Non-Muslims are mainly accepting Islam through their own research of Islam instead of observing a practical example of a successful Muslim. One who desires to spread Islam must make it their priority to purify their character through knowledge. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

*"Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not do."*

When one acts in this way then a little correct knowledge will have a massive impact on themselves and others. Whereas, those who reject this correct attitude may possess more knowledge but it will have no positive effect on anybody. This type of person has been described in the Holy Quran. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

## Under Your Care

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 124:

*"[Allah] said, "Indeed, I will make you [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] a leader for the people." [Abraham] said, "And of my descendants?""*

Here the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, showed a genuine concern for his offspring.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2409, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person is a guardian and responsible for the things under their care.

The greatest thing a Muslim is a guardian of is their faith. Therefore, they must strive to fulfill its responsibility by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This guardianship also includes every blessing one has been granted by Allah, the Exalted, which includes external things such as wealth and internal things such as one's body. A Muslim must fulfill the responsibility of these things by using them in the way prescribed by Islam. For example, a Muslim should only use their eyes to look at lawful things and their tongue to utter only lawful and useful words.

This guardianship also extends to others within one's life such as relatives and friends. A Muslim must fulfill this responsibility by fulfilling their rights such as providing for them and gently commanding good and forbidding evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should not cut off from others especially over worldly issues. Instead, they should continue to treat them kindly hoping they will change for the better. This guardianship includes one's children. A Muslim must guide them by leading by example as this by far is the most effective way in guiding children. They must obey Allah, the Exalted, practically as discussed earlier and teach their children to do the same. A separate free eBook series titled: Raising Pious Children, has been produced which discusses this aspect in detail and can be viewed using the following link:

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:1122ebc4-72ab-4384-9198-7a93e45f53b3>

To conclude, according to this Hadith everyone has some sort of responsibility they have been entrusted with. So they should gain and act on the relevant knowledge in order to fulfill them as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

## True Nobility

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 124:

*"[Allah] said, "Indeed, I will make you [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] a leader for the people." [Abraham] said, "And of my descendants?" [Allah] said, "My covenant does not include the wrongdoers.""*

This verse reminds Muslims that being connected to a pious person is not good enough to achieve success. One must practically follow in their footsteps if they desire to obtain the blessings they received.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that nobility does not lie in one's lineage as all people are the descendants of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and he was made of dust. Therefore, people should give up boasting about their relatives and lineage.

It is important to understand that even though some ignorant Muslims have adopted the attitude of other nations by creating castes and sects thereby believing some people are superior to others based on these groups Islam declared a simple criterion for superiority namely, piety.

Meaning, the more a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience the greater they are in rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

This verse destroys all other standards which have been created by ignorant people such as one’s race, ethnicity, wealth, gender or social status.

In addition, if a Muslim is proud of a pious person in their lineage they should correctly demonstrate this belief by praising Allah, the Exalted, and following in their footsteps. Boasting about others without following in their footsteps will not help someone in either this world or the next. This has been made clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2945.

Finally, the one who is proud of others but fails to follow in their footsteps is indirectly dishonoring them as the outside world will observe their bad character and assume their righteous ancestor behaved in the same manner. These people should therefore strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because of this reason. These are like those people who adopt the outward traditions and advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf yet, fail to adopt his inner character. The outside

world will only think negatively about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they observe the bad character of these Muslims.



## The Kaaba

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 127:

*“And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], “Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing.””*

Muslims should follow in the footsteps of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, by regularly dedicating some of their time and energy in acts which please Allah, the Exalted, beyond the obligatory duties. No one is ordering Muslims to dedicate all their efforts like the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, did but they should regularly dedicate some.

This event also indicates the importance of sincerity. It is clear from the verse quoted at the beginning that the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, and his son, peace be upon them, intended only to please Allah, the Exalted, as they immediately supplicated to Him to accept their efforts thereby making it clear that their pious intention was not hidden from Allah, the Exalted.

This is a clear lesson for all Muslims to ensure that their intention is correct whenever they perform good deeds. The one who performs deeds to please someone other than Allah, the Exalted, will be told to

gain their reward from them on Judgement Day which will not be possible. This is warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this event also teaches the important lesson of being humble to Allah, the Exalted. One should never be proud of anything they possess or any righteous deed they perform as they are only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to complete a good deed are all granted by Allah, the Exalted. Having pride over a deed not only ensures its destruction but if a person dies while possessing even an atom's worth of pride will enter Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266. A Muslim must always remember that Allah, the Exalted, could have easily inspired someone else to perform the good deed. Therefore, they should show humility and gratitude that they were chosen.

Finally, this event indicates the importance of not only performing a good deed but the importance of it being accepted by Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward in the hereafter as well as in this world. This will only occur if a Muslim safely takes the righteous deed into the next world with them. This has been indicated in chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 160:

*“Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgment] with a good deed...”*

This verse clearly declares that whoever brings a good deed meaning, to Judgment Day, will be rewarded. It does not declare that whoever

performs a deed will be rewarded. A Muslim must therefore safeguard their deeds by protecting them from the evil traits which can destroy them such as pride. This requires a Muslim to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to remove the bad characteristics they possess which can lead to the destruction of their good deeds.

## Timeless Honor

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 125:

*“...And take from the standing place of Abraham a place of prayer...”*

This incident is a clear proof that those who dedicate their effort and time for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will not only gain reward but their efforts will also be remembered for all to see in both worlds. Even though the house of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, might not seem like an architectural marvel yet, as it was built for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, it is still established and greatly honoured to this day even though nearly 4500 years have passed since its construction by the Holy Prophet Ibrahim and his son, peace be upon them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 127:

*“And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael...”*

Countless people have built great castles, palaces and empires over the centuries yet the majority of them faded away and are barely remembered by society. Even those who built them have become footnotes in history.

As indicated by the main verse under discussion, not only does the work done for the sake, of Allah, the Exalted, itself endure but even those that did the work are remembered just like the Holy Prophet Ibrahim and his son, peace be upon them. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, honoured his efforts so much that one cannot even complete the visitation, known as Umra, and the Holy Pilgrimage, known as Hajj, without praying behind the stone the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, stood on while building the house of Allah, the Exalted.

All worldly efforts will eventually fade away. They may benefit people temporarily in this world but it will not help them in the next world. In fact, even though they will leave those efforts behind yet, on Judgment Day they will be held accountable for them. Whereas, efforts dedicated to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, will benefit a Muslim in both worlds. These efforts do not have to be huge like building an entire Mosque. A Muslim only needs to act according to their strength, such as contributing towards the building of a Mosque. If they act with sincerity their reward will be beyond imagination. This has been indicated in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. This Hadith advises that a small effort such as donating a single date fruit for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be rewarded with blessings greater in size than a mountain.

## Purpose of Mosques

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 125:

*“...And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, [saying], "Purify My House...””*

This command reminds Muslims of the purpose of Mosques. They are a place of sincerely worshiping Allah, the Exalted, and gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that every moment of one's life is spent in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even when they are not in a Mosque. The main people responsible for fulfilling this task are the scholars and custodians of the Mosques.

Unfortunately, some have abandoned warning mankind of the mistakes of the past nations and how they were destroyed as a result of them. Instead, they inflate the concept of wishful thinking in respect to the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, by telling stories about saints without teaching the audience how to follow in their footsteps and achieve sainthood. These inviters to Islam give the false impression salvation lies in attending a weekly religious gathering and only declaring one's love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the saints through words without supporting it with action. They adopt this behavior as they believe becoming a popular speaker is more important than fulfilling the tradition of all the

Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. Chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 1-2:

*“O you who covers himself [with a garment]. Arise and warn.”*

Every Islamic discourse should deliver a concise and useful message. Unfortunately, some only attend gatherings which are composed of storytelling with no real purpose and meaning. These gatherings are only held in order to please the masses with flowery but meaningless speech. Some lecturers incorrectly believe they must provide their listeners with hours' worth of information in order to achieve success. But they fail to realize a few good words which inspire the audience towards improvement is much better. A gathering is only useful when the audience leaves with the sincere intention to reform themselves. But this requires the one who desires to spread the word of faith to turn away from the incorrect attitude of searching for new ideas and concepts before acting on the basics.

## **Best and Worse Places**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 125:

*“...And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, [saying], "Purify My House for those who perform circumambulation and those who are staying [there] for worship and those who bow and prostrate [in prayer].””*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most beloved places to Allah, the Exalted, are the Mosques and the most hated places to Him are the market places.

Islam does not prohibit Muslims from going to places other than the Mosques. Nor does it command them to always inhabit the Mosques. But it is important that they prioritize attending Mosques for the congregational prayers and attending religious gatherings over visiting the market places unnecessarily.

When a need arises there is no harm to attend other places, such as shopping centers, but a Muslim should avoid going to them unnecessarily as they are places where sins more often occur. Whereas, the Mosques are meant to be a sanctuary from sins and a comfortable place to obey Allah, the Exalted, in. This involves fulfilling the commands



of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Just like a student benefits from a library as it is an environment created for studying similarly, Muslims can benefit from Mosques as their very purpose is to encourage Muslims to obtain and act on useful knowledge so that they can obey Allah, the Exalted.

Not only should a Muslim prioritize the Mosques over other places but they should encourage others such as their children to do the same. In fact, it is an excellent place for the youth to avoid sins, crimes and bad company, which lead to nothing but trouble and regret in both worlds.

## **True Faith Brings Security**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 126:

*“And [mention] when Abraham said, “My Lord, make this a secure city...””*

Unfortunately, there are some who claim that faith is not required in this world and others who are Muslims claim it is enough to profess Islam without supporting it with sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. But this increase in crimes proves the importance of faith and strengthening it through knowledge and action. This is because crimes and sins only occur as a person feels they will either face no consequences for their actions, such as prison, or they will somehow escape them for example, by fleeing the country. But the person who believes that no matter what action they perform, whether open or secret, big or small, and no matter what tricks they attempt a day will undoubtedly come where they will be held accountable for all their deeds will always think twice before committing a crime or a sin. If this belief is strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge it will deter one from committing crimes and sins. If people acted in this way peace and justice would spread across society. The crime rate would decrease and the times would closely match the times of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his rightly guided Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them. This fact alone indicates the importance of faith and strengthening it through gaining and acting on knowledge within society. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 90:

*“Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving [help] to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.”*

## **Means Not End**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 126:

*“And [mention] when Abraham said, “My Lord...provide its people with fruits - whoever of them believes in Allah and the Last Day.”...”*

In this short supplication the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, pointed out the purpose of obtaining the necessities of life namely, to actualize one’s faith in Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience so that they adequately prepare for the Day of Judgement. The necessities of life are therefore a means to an end and not an end in themselves.

Every worldly blessing a Muslim possesses is only a means which should aid them in reaching the hereafter safely. It is not an end in itself. For example, wealth is a means one should use in order to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, fulfilling their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. It is not an end or an ultimate goal in itself.

This not only aids a Muslim in maintaining their focus on the hereafter but it also aids them whenever they lose worldly blessings. When a

Muslim treats each worldly blessing, such as a child, as a means to please Allah, the Exalted, and reach the hereafter safely then losing it will not have such a detrimental impact on them. They may become sad, which is an acceptable emotion, but they will not become grieved which leads to impatience and other mental problems, such as depression. This is because they firmly believe the worldly blessing they possessed was only a means so losing it does not cause a loss in the ultimate goal namely, Paradise, the loss of which is disastrous. Therefore, still possessing and concentrating on the ultimate goal will prevent them from becoming grieved.

In addition, they will understand that just like the thing they lost was only a means they firmly believe they will be provided with another means to reach and fulfil their ultimate goal by Allah, the Exalted. This will also prevent them from grieving. Whereas, the one who believes their worldly blessing is the end instead of a means will experience severe grief when losing it as their whole purpose and objective has been lost. This grief will lead to depression and other mental issues.

To conclude, Muslims should treat each blessing they possess as a means to reach the hereafter safely not as an end in itself. This is how one can possess things without being possessed by them. This is how they can keep worldly things in their hands and not in their hearts.

## **True Submission**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 128:

*“Our Lord, and make us [Prophets Ibrahim and Ismaeel, peace be upon them] Muslims [in submission] to You and from our descendants a Muslim nation [in submission] to You...”*

The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, clearly demonstrated what a true Muslim is by practically sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of his life. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Therefore, a person will only become a true Muslim, thereby fulfilling this supplication, when they practically follow in his footsteps.

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.

## Rites of Obedience

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 128:

*“Our Lord...show us [Prophets Ibrahim and Ismaeel, peace be upon them] our rites [of worship and obedience]...”*

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.

## **Life is a Mirror**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 128:

*“Our Lord...turn to us [Prophets Ibrahim and Ismaeel, peace be upon them] in grace [and mercy]...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that Allah, the Exalted, will not show mercy to the one who does not show mercy to others.

Islam is a very simple religion. One of its fundamental teachings is so simple that even uneducated people can understand and act on them namely, how people treat others is how they will be treated by Allah, the Exalted. For example, those who learn to overlook and forgive the mistakes of others will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”*

Those who support others in beneficial worldly and religious matters such as emotional or financial aid will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893. This same Hadith advises that the one who conceals the faults of others will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, if one treats others with kindness and respect according to the teachings of Islam they will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted. And those who mistreat others will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted, even if they fulfill the obligatory duties which are connected to Him such as the obligatory prayers. This is because a Muslim must fulfill both duties in order to achieve success namely, the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Finally, it is important to note a Muslim will only be treated kindly by Allah, the Exalted, if they treat others kindly for His sake. If they do it for any other reason than they will undoubtedly forfeit the reward mentioned in these teachings. The foundation of all acts and Islam itself is one's intention. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

## **Purpose of Holy Prophets, peace be upon them**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 129:

*"[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said] Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves..."*

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is for them to be sincerely obeyed and followed. 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 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.

## Following the Holy Quran

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 129:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said] Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book...”*

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

## **A Great Blessing**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 129:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said] Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will...teach them...wisdom...”*

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. This is in fact the wisdom mentioned in this verse.

## **Spiritual Purification**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 129:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said] Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will...purify them...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This

purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

## One Religion

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 130:

*“And who would be averse to the religion of Abraham except one who makes a fool of himself...”*

It is important to note, that all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, came with the same religion, Islam – submission to Allah, the Exalted. The only thing they differed in were small legal issues which were changed depending on the time period they lived in but their core and fundamental teachings were one in the same.

This verse reminds Muslims that the one who turns away from practically implementing the teachings of Islam is only making a fool out of themselves as simply declaring belief with one's tongue is not good enough. In fact, the other major religions also verbally accept the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, but as they fail to follow in his footsteps they will not obtain success. Believing otherwise is not hoping in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, it is merely wishful thinking.

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.

## A Chosen Servant

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 130:

*“...And We had chosen him [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] in this world...”*

Allah, the Exalted, chooses the servant He loves. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7432, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves the servant who possesses the following characteristics. The first characteristic is piety. This means they strive to fulfill their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and they fulfill their duties towards people, such as striving in this world in order to obtain their necessities and the necessities of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being independent of the creation. This means that a Muslim should fully utilize the means they have been provided by Allah, the Exalted, such as their physical strength in order to fulfill their duties. They should not behave lazily and seek things from people as this habit leads to dependence on them and reduces trusting in Allah, the Exalted. One should firmly believe that no matter what happens whatever is destined

to be their provision was allocated to them 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. A Muslim should focus on their efforts and trust that Allah, the Exalted, will grant them what is best for them.

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being anonymous. This means a Muslim should not strive in worldly or religious matters in order to obtain fame. As this can lead to many sins, such as showing off, and this only destroys one's reward. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that seeking fame is more destructive to one's religion than two wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. Instead, a Muslim should strive to fulfill their duties and if they become famous they must maintain sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, without altering their obedience to Him in order to please people as this leads to destruction in both worlds.



## Company of the Greats

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 130:

*“...and indeed he [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him], in the Hereafter, will be among the righteous.”*

Every Muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they barely know him as they are too busy to study his life, character and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by

Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

## **Submission to Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 131:

*"When his Lord said to him [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him], "Submit," he said, "I have submitted [in Islam] to the Lord of the worlds.""*

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

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

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

## **Giver of Life and Death**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 258:

*“...Abraham said, "My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death,"...”*

Allah, the Exalted, alone created and controls both life and death.

The Muslim who understands this divine name will submit and sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience without fearing any of the creation while knowing nothing controls life or death except Allah, the Exalted. In addition, a Muslim who recognises this fact will understand that as Allah, the Exalted, chose the beginning and end of every creation He has also chosen everything that occurs in between. The choices of Allah, the Exalted, are unavoidable so one should not become impatient when facing them. Instead they should simply sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in every situation so that they obtain reward with every passing moment. For example, they should demonstrate patience during times of difficulty and demonstrate true gratitude by using the blessings they possess correctly in times of ease. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500.

A Muslim should act on this divine name by bringing their spiritual heart to life and cause death to their ego and negative characteristics by striving to remove them from themselves through obtaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

## The Resurrection

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 260:

*“And [mention] when Abraham said, "My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead." [Allah] said, "Have you not believed?" He said, "Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied." [Allah] said, "Take four birds and commit them to yourself. Then [after slaughtering them] put on each hill a portion of them; then call them - they will come [flying] to you in haste...”*

First of all, it must be pointed out that the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, did not question the process of resurrection because he had any doubts. To harbour such an evil thought about a Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, is foolish. He clearly answered in the affirmative when questioned about his belief in it. This is recorded in the Holy Quran and is therefore unchallengeable. A Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, cannot lie nor act like a hypocrite by saying one thing and believing something else.

An important lesson to learn from this event is the importance of gaining certainty of faith. There are different grades of faith a Muslim can adopt. The person of weak faith is like the one who has been told there is a snake in their bedroom by someone they do not trust like a stranger. Even though, they might believe the person yet, they will not be certain the information is true. The one who has stronger faith is like the one

who is told there is a snake in their bedroom by someone they trust, such as a relative. This level of faith is possessed by the majority of Muslims who accepted Islam because they were told to by someone they trust, such as their parents. The next level of faith is based on knowledge, research and experience. For example, if a person observes signs of the snake in their bedroom, such as its shedded skin, bite marks and other signs. This level is achieved when a Muslim gains and acts on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This causes the signs of Allah, the Exalted, and the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to become manifest to them. The more they gain and act on knowledge the more signs are shown to them. 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...”*

The highest level of faith is witnessing with one’s physical eyes, which will be granted to all of mankind after their death and on the Day of Judgment. This is like physically seeing the snake in the bedroom.

It is vital for all Muslims to learn from this event by studying the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they can strengthen their faith. Not only will the one who possesses strong faith perform righteous deeds and refrain from sins more than someone with weak faith but they will more easily overcome any difficulties they face in their life. They will respond to each situation as advised by Islam and gain an uncountable reward. Meaning, when they face times of ease they will show gratitude to Allah,



the Exalted, by using all the blessings they possess correctly. When they face difficulties they will remain patient and even be content with what Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them. These are the characteristics of the successful.

## The Covenant

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 67:

*“Abraham...was one inclining toward truth...”*

This declaration is connected to chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

*“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware."”*

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all Muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a Muslim has a choice between pleasing Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows Muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for Muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments,

enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person's heart indicates that it is a duty on Muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a Muslim. Certainty of faith allows a Muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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...”*

## **Polytheism**

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 67:

*“Abraham was...not of the polytheists.”*

The greatest major sin is to associate others with Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6273. Polytheism can be classified as greater and minor. The greater type is when one worships more than one God. If a person dies in this state they will not be forgiven. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 48:

*“Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him...”*

The minor type is when one shows off their actions. This has been confirmed in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. On Judgment Day those who performed deeds to please others besides Allah, the Exalted, will be commanded to gain their reward from them which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

## **Divine Friendship**

The next discussion is based on chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 125:

*“...And Allah took Abraham as an intimate friend.”*

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 some important things. The first thing mentioned is that Allah, the Exalted, declares war on the person who shows enmity to one of His righteous friends.

This occurs as the one who shows enmity to a person's friend is in fact showing enmity to the person indirectly. This indirectly warns Muslims to only befriend the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, and to never show any enmity or dislike for them as this is the attitude of the enemies of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Devil. Chapter 60 Al Mumtahanah, verse 1:

*“O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies...”*

It is important to note, that any form of disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, is waging war against Him. Therefore, a Muslim should avoid all forms of disobedience including disliking those who strive in obeying Him as this only invites the anger of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3862, that a person should never insult his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as insulting them is like insulting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and whoever harms him has insulted Allah, the Exalted. And this sinful person will soon be punished unless they sincerely repent.

The next thing mentioned in the main divine Hadith under discussion is that a Muslim can only draw close to Allah, the Exalted, through fulfilling their obligatory duties. And they can achieve the love of Allah, the Exalted, through voluntary righteous deeds.

This description splits the servants of Allah, the Exalted, into two categories. The first group draws near to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer, and in respect to people, such as the obligatory charity. This can be summed up by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

The second category of those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, are superior to the first group as they not only fulfil their obligatory duties but strive in voluntary righteous deeds. This clearly shows that this is the only path to the proximity of Allah, the Exalted. Whoever takes a path other than this will not achieve this vital goal. This

completely rejects the concept of obtaining sainthood without striving in obedience to Allah, the Exalted. The person who claims this is simply a liar. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body becomes pure. This leads to righteous deeds. So if a person does not perform righteous deeds, such as their obligatory duties, then their body is impure which means their spiritual heart is impure as well. This person can never reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, the greatest voluntary righteous deeds one can perform are those based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anyone who chooses to perform voluntary righteous deeds not based on his traditions has been fooled by the Devil as no path will take one close to Allah, the Exalted, except the path and actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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....”*

The pious Muslims who belong in the second higher group are also those who avoid unnecessary things of this material world. This attitude aids them in focusing their efforts on performing voluntary righteous deeds. It is this group who have perfected their faith by loving, hating, giving and withholding all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.



The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds Allah, the Exalted, 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.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this Muslim's supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.

## Strong Faith

The next discussion is based on chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 75:

*“And thus did We show Abraham the realm of the heavens and the earth that he would be among the certain [in faith].”*

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. 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...”*

For example, if a Muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun

to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

## **A Truthful Declaration**

The next discussion is based on chapter 6 Al An'am, verses 78-79:

*"And when he saw the sun rising, he [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] said, "This is my lord; this is greater." But when it set he said, "O my people, indeed I am free from what you associate with Allah. Indeed, I have turned my face [i.e., self] toward He who created the heavens and the earth, inclining toward truth, and I am not of those who associate others with Allah.""*

The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, rejected the false gods of his people and instead declared his complete submission to Allah, the Exalted. He specifically rejected their false gods by indicating their temporal nature such as the setting of the Sun they worshipped, which directly challenged their misplaced devotion to them.

It is important for Muslims not to follow in their footsteps by misplacing their devotion and dedication to the excess and unnecessary elements of this material world or to others beyond the limits set by Islam. Just like the things pointed out by the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, fade away and are temporary in nature so is this material world. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verse 8:

*“And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground.”*

So unnecessarily dedicating one's efforts to the fading material world is pointless and making it one's main focus, the centre of their universe and the purpose of their existence is simply foolish as it will eventually pass away with their efforts. Then they will only be left with dust, regrets and the consequences of their actions. This reality is quite obvious when one reflects on their own life and those moments, things and people which seemed to be great and enduring yet, they all faded away as if they never existed in the first place.

One should instead follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the righteous predecessors by striving in this material world in order to fulfil their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. Then they should dedicate their efforts to preparing for the eternal hereafter. This will ensure that when the material world passes away they are left with blessings and righteous deeds which will aid them in their greatest moment of need.

## Perfecting Faith

The next discussion is based on chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 114:

*“And the request of forgiveness of Abraham for his father was only because of a promise he had made to him. But when it became apparent to him [i.e., Abraham] that he [i.e., the father] was an enemy to Allah, he disassociated himself from him...”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the characteristics which perfect a Muslim’s faith.

The first is to love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This includes desiring what is best for others in both worldly and religious matters. This must be practically shown through one's actions meaning, supporting others financially, emotionally and physically within one's means. Counting one's favors to others not only cancels the reward but also proves their lack of love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, as this person only loves gaining praise and other forms of compensation from people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

*“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury...”*

Any type of negative feelings towards others over worldly reasons, such as envy, contradicts loving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and must be avoided.

To sum up, this noble quality includes loving for others what one loves for themselves through actions not just words. This is an aspect of being a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is to hate for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This means one should dislike the things Allah, the Exalted, dislikes such as His disobedience. It is important to note, this does not mean one should hate others as people can sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted. Instead a Muslim should dislike the sin itself which is proven by them avoiding it and warning others against it also. Muslims should continue to advise others instead of breaking ties with them as this act of kindness may well cause them to sincerely repent. This includes not disliking things based on one's own feelings, such as an action, which is lawful. Finally the proof of one disliking for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is that when they show their dislike through their words and actions it will never be in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. Meaning, their dislike for something will never cause them to commit a sin as this would prove that their dislike for something is for their own sake.



## Showing Mercy

The next discussion is based on chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 114:

*“...Indeed was Abraham compassionate...”*

Throughout the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Muslims have been advised to be merciful to others. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, advises that those who show mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, that showing mercy is not only through one's actions, such as donating wealth to the poor. It in fact encompasses every aspect of one's life and interaction with others, such as one's words. This is why Allah, the Exalted, warns those who show mercy to others by donating charity that failing to show mercy through their speech, such as counting their favours done to others, only cancels their reward. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

*“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury...”*

True mercy is shown in everything: one's facial expression, one's glance and the tone of their speech. This was the full mercy shown by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is therefore how Muslims must act.

In addition, showing mercy is so important that Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear in the Holy Quran that even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possessed countless beautiful and noble characteristics yet, the one which attracted the hearts of people towards him and Islam was mercy. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

*“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”*

It clearly warns that without mercy people would have fled from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If this was the case in respect to him even though he possessed countless other beautiful characteristics how can Muslims, who do not possess such noble characteristics, expect to have a positive impact on others, such as their children, without showing true mercy?

Simply put, Muslims should treat others how they wish to be treated by Allah, the Exalted, and others, which is undoubtedly with true and full mercy.

## Real Patience

The next discussion is based on chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 114:

*“...Indeed was Abraham...patient.”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1302, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that real patience is shown at the onset of a difficulty.

It is important to understand that true patience is shown throughout a calamity meaning, from the very onset of the difficulty onwards. Accepting the reality of a difficulty, such as the death of a loved one, eventually, with the passing of time occurs with everyone. This is acceptance not true patience.

Muslims should therefore ensure they encounter difficulties while patient believing that everything which Allah, the Exalted, chooses is for the best even if they fail to observe the wisdoms behind the choices. Instead, they should reflect on the many times when they believed something was good yet, it ended up being bad and vice versa. Understanding the extreme short sightedness and limited knowledge of humans and the infinite knowledge and wisdom of Allah, the Exalted,

can aid a Muslim to show patience from the onset of a difficulty. 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.”*

In addition, it is important for Muslims to continue showing patience till the end of their life. This is because a person can easily lose the reward of patience even if they were patient from the onset by demonstrating impatience further down the line. This is an extremely deadly trap of the Devil. He patiently waits for decades just to ruin the reward of a Muslim. The Holy Quran makes it clear that a Muslim will gain reward for what they bring to Judgment Day, meaning, take with them when they die it does not declare they will gain reward after simply doing a deed, such as showing patience at the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 160:

*“Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgment] with a good deed...”*

## Spreading Peace

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 69:

*“And certainly did Our messengers [i.e., angels] come to Abraham with good tidings; they said, "Peace." He said, "Peace," and did not delay in bringing [them] a roasted calf.”*

The speech and actions of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, embodies the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 12. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised a good quality found within Islam. Namely, to spread the Islamic greeting of peace to people one knows and to those they do not know.

It is important to act on this good characteristic as nowadays Muslims often only spread the Islamic greeting of peace to those they know. It is important to spread it to all as this leads to love between people and strengthens Islam. In fact, this characteristic leads to Paradise according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 194.

A Muslim should never forget that they will receive a minimum of ten rewards for every greeting of peace they extend to others even if others fail to reply to them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5195.

Finally, a Muslim should fulfill the Islamic greeting of peace correctly by demonstrating this peace in their other speech and actions towards others by keeping their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others. This is in fact, the definition of a true Muslim and believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

## United Family

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 73:

*“...May the mercy of Allah and His blessings be upon you [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and his family], people of the house...”*

If Muslims desire to gain the mercy and blessings of Allah, the Exalted, within their household they must adopt the correct intention and behaviour.

With the passing of time relatives often become divided and lose the strong connection they once had with one another. There are many causes of this but a major cause is the foundation on which their connection was formed by their parents and relatives. It is commonly known that when the foundation of a building is weak the building will either get damaged over time or even collapse. Similarly, when the foundation of bonds connecting people are not correct the bonds between them will eventually weaken or even break. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brought the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, together he formed the bonds between them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, most Muslims today bring people together for the sake of tribalism, brotherhood and to show off to other families. Even though, the majority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not related but as the foundation of the bonds connecting them was correct namely,



for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, their bonds grew from strength to strength. Whereas, many Muslims nowadays are related by blood yet, with the passing of time become separated as the foundation of their bonds was based on falsehood namely, tribalism and similar things.

Muslims must understand that if desire for their bonds to endure and to earn reward for fulfilling the important duty of upholding the ties of kinship and the rights of non-relatives then they must only forge bonds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The foundation of this is that people only connect with one another and act together in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been commanded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

## Forbearance

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 75:

*“Indeed, Abraham was forbearing...”*

A Muslim should be lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

## Being Gentle

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 75:

*“Indeed, Abraham was...tender-hearted...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters.

This is an important characteristic which must be adopted by all Muslims. It should be used in all aspects of one's life. It is important to understand that being gentle benefits the Muslim themselves more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and minimize the amount of sins they commit, as a gentle person is less likely to commit sins through their speech and actions, but it benefits them in worldly affairs also. For example, the person who treats their spouse gently will gain more love and respect in return than if they treated their spouse in a harsh manner. Children are more likely to obey and treat their parents with respect when they are treated gently. Colleagues at work are more likely to help the one who is gentle with them. The examples are endless. Only in very rare cases is a harsh attitude required. In most cases, gentle behaviour will be much more effective than a harsh attitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possesses countless good qualities yet, Allah, the exalted, specifically highlighted his gentleness in the Holy Quran as it is a key ingredient required to affect others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Al Imran, verse 159:

*“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”*

A Muslim must remember that they will never be better than a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, nor will the person they interact with be worse than Pharaoh yet, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Musa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them, to deal with Pharaoh in a kind manner. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 44:

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

Therefore, a Muslim should adopt gentleness in all affairs as it leads to much reward and affects others, such as one's family, in a positive way.

## Remembering Allah, the Exalted

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 75:

*“Indeed, Abraham was...and [frequently] returning [to Allah].”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6407, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the difference between the person who remembers Allah, the Exalted, and the one who does not is like a living person compared to a dead person.

It is important for Muslims who desire to create a strong connection with Allah, the Exalted, so that they can overcome all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter successfully to remember Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible. Put simply, the more they remember Him the more they will achieve this vital goal.

This is achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The second is by remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue. But the highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This

is achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This requires one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds.

Those who remain on the first two levels will receive reward depending on their intention but they are unlikely to increase the strength of their faith and piety unless they move to the third and highest level of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

## Slaves of the World

The next discussion is based on chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 35:

*“...Abraham said, "My Lord...keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols.””*

It is obvious that a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, would never worship an actual idol. So this supplication could be referring to anything which distracts a person from Allah, the Exalted, and therefore, can be considered an 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.”*

## **A Virtuous Gift**

The next discussion is based on chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 39:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said] Praise to Allah, who has granted to me in old age Ishmael and Isaac...”*

A Muslim must truly praise Allah, the Exalted, when they are granted children by raising them according to the teachings of Islam so that they become a source of blessings for them in both worlds. For example, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1952, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most virtuous gift a parent can give their child is to teach them good character.

This Hadith reminds Muslims to be more concerned about the faith of their relatives, such as their children, over acquiring and imparting wealth and properties to them. It is important to understand, worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example is the great empire of Pharaoh. Unfortunately, many Muslims are so concerned about teaching their children how to build an empire and acquire much wealth and properties that they neglect teaching them the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with

patience. This includes good manners towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. A Muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for teaching their children good manners as their moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly.

In addition, it is extremely difficult to teach good manners to children when they get older and become set in their ways. Today is the day a Muslim should truly reflect on the gift they wish to impart to their children and relatives. This is how a Muslim sends forward good to the hereafter but also leaves good behind as a righteous child which supplicates for their deceased parent benefits them. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted.

## **The Responder to Prayers**

The next discussion is based on chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 39:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said]...Indeed, my Lord is the Hearer of supplication.”*

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who answers all supplications by either fulfilling one's requests, removing an equivalent sin from their book of deeds or by saving reward for them in the hereafter as long as the etiquettes and conditions of a supplication are fulfilled. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604. Allah, the Exalted, is in fact far too generous and shy to turn away a beggar from His door empty handed. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3556.

The Muslim who understands this divine name will persist on supplicating to Allah, the Exalted, and never give up hope of an answer. They will strive to fulfil all the conditions and etiquettes of a supplication in order to guarantee its acceptance.

A Muslim must act on this divine name by fulfilling the good requests of people. In fact, a Hadith found in Shama'il At Tirmidhi, number 335,

advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never turned someone down when asked for something good.

## True Hope

The next discussion is based on chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 56:

*“He [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] said, “And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord except for those astray?””*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands,

refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

## **A True Leader**

The next discussion is based on chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 120:

*“Indeed, Abraham was a [comprehensive] leader...”*

It is important for all Muslims, especially parents, to act on what they advise to others. It is obvious if one turns the pages of history that those who acted on what they preached had a much more positive effect on others compared to those who did not lead by example. The best example being the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who not only practiced what he preached but adhered to those teachings more strictly than anyone else. Only with this attitude will Muslims especially, parents have a positive impact on others. For example, if a mother warns her children not to lie as it is a sin but often lies in front of them her children are unlikely to act on her advice. A person's actions will always have more of an impact on others than their speech. It is important to note that this does not mean one needs to be perfect before advising others. It means they should sincerely strive to act on their own advice before advising others. The Holy Quran has made it clear in the following verse that Allah, the exalted, hates this behaviour. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, that the a person who commanded good but refrained from it themselves and prohibited evil yet acted on it themselves will be punished in severely Hell. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:



*“Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not do.”*

So it is vital for all Muslims to strive to act on their advice themselves then advise others to do the same. Leading by example is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and is the best way to affect others in a positive way.

## **Obedience to Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 120:

*"Indeed, Abraham was...devoutly obedient to Allah..."*

True obedience 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.

## **Gratitude to Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 121:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was] grateful for His favors...”*

A Muslim must ensure they fulfill all three aspects of gratitude so that they avoid becoming a denier of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who is ungrateful in reality, scorns the One who granted them the blessings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

*“...And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.”*

The three aspects of gratitude are to internally acknowledge Allah, the Exalted, as the sole Creator and Provider of all blessings. An aspect of this is to correct one's intention so that they only perform actions to please Allah, the Exalted. The next aspect is to praise Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue. And the final and highest aspect is to practically show gratitude through one's actions by using each blessing as prescribed by Islam in order to please 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]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'”*

As true gratitude leads to an increase in blessings Muslims should fear that showing ingratitude may cause the blessings they possess to either be taken away from them or for their blessings to be used against them by becoming a burden and a curse for them in both worlds. It is important to note, even if a Muslim becomes truly grateful they will still face tests and difficulties as they are guaranteed. But if they behave in the correct way they will be guided through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and body in this world and a great reward in the hereafter.

## Good in Both Worlds

The next discussion is based on chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 122:

*“And We gave him [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] good in this world, and indeed, in the Hereafter he will be among the righteous.”*

A Muslim can only obtain good in both worlds if they behave correctly in this world.

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

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

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a Muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

## Truthfulness

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 41:

*“And mention in the Book [the story of] Abraham. Indeed, he was a man of truth...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed the importance of truthfulness and avoiding lies. The first part advises that truthfulness leads to righteousness which in turn leads to Paradise. When a person persists on truthfulness they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a truthful person.

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal



sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

## **A Good Guide**

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 43:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said]...so follow me; I will guide you to an even path.”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who guides others to something good will receive the same reward as those who act on their advice. And those who guide others to sins will be held accountable as if they committed the sins.

It is important for Muslims to be careful when advising and guiding others. A Muslim should only advise others in matters of good so that they gain reward from it and avoid advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. A person will not escape punishment on Judgment Day by simply claiming they are only inviting others towards sins even if they did not commit the sins themselves. Allah, the Exalted, will hold both the guide and the follower accountable for their actions. Muslims should therefore only advise others to do the things they would do themselves. If they dislike an action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

Because of this Islamic principle Muslims should ensure they gain the adequate knowledge before advising others as they can easily multiply their own sins if they incorrectly advise others.

In addition, this principle is an extremely easy way for Muslims to gain reward for actions they cannot perform themselves due to a lack of means, such as wealth. For example, a person who is not financially able to donate charity can encourage others to do so and this will result in them gaining the same reward as the one who gave charity.

## **Aim High**

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 44:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said]...do not worship [i.e., obey] Satan. Indeed Satan has ever been, to the Most Merciful, disobedient.*

The Devil tries to convince Muslims to always observe those who are worse than them in behaviour in order to justify their lack of striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and improving their character and behaviour for the better. For example, a Muslim who offers their obligatory prayers once in a while will observe someone who does not pray at all in order to make themselves feel better. A thief will look at a murderer and convince themselves stealing is not so bad. The examples are endless. It is very strange how these Muslims so easily observe those who appear worse than them in order to justify their lack of effort in obeying Allah, the Exalted, but these same people will not observe those who are in a worse off position than them when they face difficulties. For example, the person who suffers from back pain will not observe the one who is physically disabled so that it prevents them from complaining. This attitude has specifically been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513.

In addition, if observing those who appear worse in their behaviour does not save one from punishment in a worldly court, such as a thief being

pardoned by a judge because there are many murderers in the world, how can one imagine this excuse will hold up in the court of Allah, the Exalted?

Muslims should therefore avoid this trap of the Devil by observing those who appear better than them so that they are inspired to improve their character and behaviour progressively for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This is what Allah, the Exalted, demands meaning, He does not demand perfection.

## Reply with Good

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verses 46-47:

*"[He said] said, "Have you no desire for my gods, O Abraham? If you do not desist, I will surely stone you, so avoid me a prolonged time." [Abraham] said, "Peace be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you of my Lord...""*

It is easy to reply evil with evil. But what makes a Muslim special is when they reply evil with good. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is important to understand that behaving in this manner will never reduce a person's rank in anyway. Otherwise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not have acted in this way. In fact, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, advises that when one replies evil with good, such as forgiving others, Allah, the Exalted, raises them in honour. So this attitude does not only benefit others but more importantly it benefits the Muslim themselves. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*"And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend."*

In addition, as advised by this verse if someone adopts this attitude they will find that those who do not treat them well will eventually become ashamed of their actions and change their attitude. Even the most toughest hearts eventually become affected when treated in this manner. For example, when a husband mistreats his wife then it is best for her to rise above a negative reply and instead reply in a nice manner. This will cause the husband to respect and love his wife more. When a colleague at work shows bad manners it is best to show them the quality of a true Muslim by replying with good manners. When one behaves like this the people around them will respect and love them more which will cause their life to become easier. But when a person replies evil with evil they will always face more evil from others which will only make their life harder in both worlds. This is quite obvious if one reflects over this for a moment. It is important to note, when others exceed the limits then one should defend themselves and detach from the person. But in most cases bad character should be replied with good character.

## Suitable Companions

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 48:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said] And I will leave you and those you invoke other than Allah...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5534, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between a good and bad companion. The good companion is like a person who sells perfume. Their companion will either obtain some perfume or at least be affected by the pleasant smell. Whereas, a bad companion is like a blacksmith, if their companion does not burn their clothes they will certainly be affected by the smoke.

Muslims must understand that the people they accompany will have an effect on them whether this affect is positive or negative, obvious or subtle. It is not possible to accompany someone and not be affected by it. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, confirms that a person is on their companion's religion. Meaning, a person adopts the characteristics of their companion. It is therefore important for Muslims to always accompany the righteous as they will undoubtedly affect them in a positive way meaning, they will inspire them to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Whereas, bad companions will either inspire one to disobey Allah, the Exalted, or they will encourage a Muslim to



concentrate on the material world over preparing for the hereafter. This attitude will become a great regret for them on Judgment Day even if the things they strive for are lawful but beyond their needs.

Finally, as a person will end up with those they love in the hereafter according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, a Muslim must practically show they love for the righteous by accompanying them in this world. But if they accompany bad or heedless people then it proves and indicates they love for them and their ultimate destination in the hereafter. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

*“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”*

## **Wishful Thinking**

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 48:

*"[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said]...and will invoke my Lord. I expect that I will not be in invocation to my Lord unhappy [i.e., disappointed]."*

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.

## **Blessings of Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 49:

*“So when he [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] had left them [the misguided] and those they worshipped other than Allah, We gave him Isaac and Jacob, and each [of them] We made a prophet.”*

This incident reminds Muslims that they will receive special blessings only after they practically obey Allah, the Exalted. 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.

## **Blind Following**

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verses 52-54:

*“When he [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] said to his father and his people, “What are these statues to which you are devoted?” They said, “We found our fathers worshippers of them.” He said, “You were certainly, you and your fathers, in manifest error.””*

The elders of a family, especially parents, often use a statement which they believe indicates their right guidance namely, elders know best. To be honest this statement was true in the day of the righteous predecessors as the elders at that time used to strive in gaining and acting on beneficial knowledge. They put aside their own opinions and thinking and instead adopted the advice of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Because of their sincere efforts they were granted right guidance by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Therefore, this statement applied to them and the youngsters in those days benefited if they acted on the advice of these elders. But unfortunately times have changed. In this day and age the majority of elders do not seek nor act on beneficial knowledge instead the vast majority act on their cultural practices which in most cases do not have a foundation in Islamic teachings. They flee from beneficial knowledge and are very content with these teachings based on made up cultural practices. Because of this ignorance elders are now sometimes right and sometimes wrong. Therefore, the statement elders know best no longer applies.

It is important to note this does not mean a Muslim should ignore or disrespect their elders as this completely contradicts the teachings of Islam. They should instead strive to gain correct beneficial knowledge, hear the advice of others, including their elders, and then make a choice which is indicated by Islam in all their matters even if it contradicts the opinions of others. A Muslim should not blindly follow their elders as this in most cases will lead them away from the teachings of Islam. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 116:

*“And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but misjudging.”*

This is possible to do while maintaining respect for others especially one's elders. If Muslims do this then perhaps a day will come when this statement will once again be true.



## Being Stubborn

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verses 58-68:

*“So he [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] made them [their idols] into fragments...They said, "Who has done this to our gods? Indeed, he is of the wrongdoers."...They said, "Have you done this to our gods, O Abraham?" He said, "Rather, this - the largest of them - did it, so ask them, if they should [be able to] speak." So they returned to [secretly blaming] themselves and said [to themselves], "Indeed, you are the wrongdoers." Then they reversed themselves, [saying], "You have already known that these do not speak!"...They said, "Burn him and support your gods - if you are to act."”*

These verses mention when the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, smashed the false idols of worship of his people in order to show them that their idols were lifeless, powerless and empty objects which were not worthy of worship. Even though his people did pause for a moment and secretly acknowledged that he was right yet their stubbornness prevailed and they rejected his call to true faith.

Some adopt stubbornness in worldly matters and as a result they do not change their character for the better. Instead, they remain steadfast on their attitude believing this is somehow a sign of their great strength and

wisdom. Steadfastness in matters of faith is a praiseworthy attitude but in most worldly matters it is only called stubbornness, which is blameworthy.

Unfortunately, some believe if they change their attitude it demonstrates weakness or it shows that they are admitting their fault and because of this they stubbornly fail to change for the better. Adults behave like immature children by believing that if they change their behaviour it means they have lost while others who remain steadfast on their attitude have won. This is simply childish.

In reality, an intelligent person will remain steadfast on matters of faith but in worldly matters they will change their attitude, as long as it is not sinful, in order to make their life easier. So changing to improve one's life is not a sign of weakness it is in fact a sign of intelligence.

In many cases, a person refuses to change their attitude and expects others in their life to change theirs, such as their relatives. But what often occurs is that due to stubbornness all remain in the same state which only leads to regular disagreements and arguments. A wise person understands that if the people around them do not change for the better than they should. This change will improve the quality of their life and their relationship with others which is much better than going around in circular arguments with people. This positive attitude will eventually cause others to respect them as it takes real strength to change one's character for the better.

Those who remain stubborn will always find something to be annoyed about which will remove peace from their life. This will cause further difficulties in all aspects of their life, such as their mental health. But those who adapt and change for the better will always move from one station of peace to another. If one achieves this peace does it really matter if others believe they only changed because they were wrong?

To conclude, to remain steadfast on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is praiseworthy. But in worldly matters and in cases where no sin is committed a person should learn to adapt and change their attitude so that they find some peace in this world.

## The Fire

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 68:

*“They said, “Burn him [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] and support your gods - if you are to act.””*

Many lessons can be learned from this event. The first of which is for Muslims to adopt the steadfast attitude of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him. Even though, a great force was against him he still did not shift off the path of truth and remained steadfast without compromising in the slightest. It is important for Muslims not to give into social pressure and compromise on their faith. Those who do may achieve some temporary worldly success but it will end up becoming a curse for them and eventually it will fade away leaving them with regrets. One only needs to observe the countless celebrities who compromised on their values in order to gain worldly success and how this very success led them to depression, substance abuse and in some cases suicide. On the other hand, those who remained steadfast were granted eternal success even if the worldly aspect of this success was delayed and not apparent to them. As this success contained the blessings of Allah, the Exalted, it aided them in their preparation for their journey towards the hereafter. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 30:

*“Indeed, those who have said, "Our Lord is Allah" and then remained on a right course - the angels will descend upon them, [saying], "Do not fear and do not grieve but receive good tidings of Paradise, which you were promised.”*”

It is clear that the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was patient throughout this great event. In fact, he surpassed patience and reached the level of contentment. The difference between the two is that the one who is patient does not complain about a situation but desires and even supplicates for the situation to change. Whereas, the one who is content prefers the choice of Allah, the Exalted, over their own choice and therefore does not desire things to change. The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, could have easily supplicated to Allah, the Exalted, to save him. But he did not desire to potentially contradict the will of Allah, the Exalted, as Allah, the Exalted, may have wanted him to become a martyr. Even though a supplication would have been lawful yet, he desired to perfect servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore remained silent trusting in the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to learn is that even though some situations appear and feel distressing, like the fire in this event, in the long run the things which occur are better for a Muslim than what they desire even if they do not immediately observe the wisdom behind them. Perhaps experiencing a difficulty may well be the reason a Muslim is admitted into Paradise. So it is important to at least be patient if one cannot be content with the decree of Allah, the Exalted. 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...”*

A Muslim should also remember that the one who chose the situation for them namely, Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who can take them safely out of it. This is only achieved through obedience to Him by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

*“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”*

## **Divine Support and Safety**

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 69:

*"We [i.e., Allah] said, "O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.""*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1081, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims how to gain blessings in their provision, divine support and an improvement in their condition and state.

The first thing is to sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted, before one dies. As the time of death is unknown this Hadith actually indicates sincerely repenting whenever one commits a sin meaning, repenting without delay. This consists of seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and whoever else has been wronged, feeling regret, making a firm promise not to commit the same or a similar sin again. And finally, if possible, to make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

The next thing advised in the main Hadith is that a Muslim must make use of their time before they become preoccupied with responsibilities, an illness or a difficulty. A Muslim can achieve this by obeying Allah, the Exalted, through fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must hasten to perform righteous deeds within their means as much as possible without delay as the tomorrow they hope for may never come. It is hoped that the one who behaves in this manner will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, when they are no longer in a position to perform extra righteous deeds due to a change in circumstances.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a Muslim must strengthen their bond with Allah, the Exalted, by remembering Him much. True remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, consists of three levels. The first is internal remembrance meaning, sincerity to Him. The second level consists of remembering Allah, the Exalted, by speaking good words and avoiding vain and sinful speech. And the highest level is to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, through one's actions as outlined earlier.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith is giving much charity both hidden and open. This includes both the obligatory and voluntary charity. It is important to note, this means giving charity according to one's means whether it is much or little. Allah, the Exalted, does not observe quantity He observes and judges actions based on quality meaning, one's sincerity. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. This leaves Muslims with no excuses but to give charity according to their means. In addition, it is important to give charity regularly instead of once in a while as regular deeds are more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, even if they are little. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari,



number 6465. Finally, those who desire to encourage others to give charity can give it publically. This will lead to them gaining the same reward as those who donate because of their inspiration. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. But those who are fearful of showing off, which cancels their reward, should do so privately. Islam has provided many options and opportunities for Muslims to gain much reward which lead to the removal of their burdens in both worlds.

## **No Victory in Disobedience**

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 70:

*“And they intended for him [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] a plan [i.e., harm], but We made them the greatest losers.”*

It is important for Muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a Muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A Muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice Muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

## Leading with Justice

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 73:

*“And We made them [including the Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] leaders guiding by Our command...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for Muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest as well as using each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach Muslims to push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themselves harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.<sup>1</sup> So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”*

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. They should not be neglected nor handed over to others such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

## **Being Firm on Faith**

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 77:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said] Indeed, they are enemies to me, except the Lord of the worlds.”*

This verse reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the

Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend himself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable Muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.



## The Creator

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 78:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said, “Allah, the Exalted, is] Who created me...”*”

Allah, the Exalted, is Al Khaliq, which means the Creator, Al Baari which means the Maker and Al Musawwir which means the Fashioner.

The Creator is the One who brings something into existence. In reality, there is no Creator except Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One who creates without any aid from another. On other hand, an inventor only invents things through the aid of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 96:

*“While Allah created you and that which you do?”*

The Maker is the One who arranges all of the creation and prepares them for receiving the forms He has chosen for them which is linked to the next divine name mentioned earlier namely, the Fashioner.

The Creator makes things manifest. The Maker chooses their shape, appearance, and time of creation. The Fashioner fashions the creation according to His divine will.

After understanding these divine names a Muslim must trust Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. If Allah, the Exalted, created and manages the entire universe He is more than capable in sorting out a person's problems. In addition, these names indicate that Allah, the Exalted, is the One who creates and chooses all things. So a Muslim should not challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to nothing except disappointment. It is therefore better to submit obediently and patiently await relief knowing that Allah, the Exalted, only decrees the best for His servants even if this wisdom is not obvious to them. As a Muslim is short sighted it is better to trust in the Creator whose wisdom has no limits. 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.”*

## The Guide

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 78:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said]...He [it is who] guides me.”*

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who guides His servants to what is beneficial for them in both worlds and guides them away from anything which harms them. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verse 8:

*“And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness.”*

The Muslim who understands this divine name will seek guidance in worldly and religious matters from none other than Allah, the Exalted, through the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever seeks guidance from anything else will not find lasting success.

A Muslim should act on this divine name by guiding others towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and what is beneficial to them in both worldly and religious matters according to their knowledge. This will ensure they become a true believer meaning, the one who loves for others what they desire for themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

## **Fulfill Your Half**

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 79:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said] And it is He who feeds me and gives me drink.”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, allocated all things, such as provision, to all creatures over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth.

It is important to understand that there are two aspects in respect to all situations, such as gaining one's provision. The first aspect is what Allah, the Exalted, has decided meaning, destiny; this will occur and nothing in creation can prevent this from occurring. As this is out of a person's hands it makes no sense to stress over this aspect as they have no influence on destiny irrespective of what they or anybody else does.

The second aspect is one's own efforts. This aspect a person has full control over and they should therefore concentrate on this aspect by using

the means they have been provided such as their physical strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, which they have no control over, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to gain lawful provision in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents while avoiding the unlawful, excess, waste and extravagance.

To conclude, a Muslim should never waste time stressing over things they have no control or influence over instead they should use the means they possess and act on those things which they have control over according to the teachings of Islam. This is what Allah, the Exalted, has commanded.

## **A Positive Mindset**

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 80:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said] And when I am ill, it is He who cures me.”*

Even though it is a fact that nothing in creation occurs without the will and choice of Allah, the Exalted, which includes difficulties and hardships, it is a sign of true servanthood not to attribute these things to Allah, the Exalted. The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, attributed good things to Allah, the Exalted, yet attributed illness to himself even though illnesses only occur through the choice and will of Allah, the Exalted.

This attitude is important to adopt as it makes one's mentality positive rather than negative. The one who adopts a negative mentality will only ever observe and mention their problems instead of observing the countless blessings they still possess which leads to impatience and further difficulties. Whereas, the one who possesses a positive mind-set will only ever observe and mention the countless blessings they possess in all situations which leads to patience and true gratitude which is shown by the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, in this great event. It is important to firmly believe that the glass is half full not half empty.

## Strive for Knowledge

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 83:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said] My Lord, grant me wisdom...”*

Wisdom aids a person to correctly act on their knowledge so that they benefit themselves and others.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted upon is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*



A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

## **The Refuge of Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 26:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] said, "Indeed, I will emigrate to [the service of] my Lord...”*

This reminds Muslims to continuously seek the refuge of Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience as all good lies in this.

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He is with anyone who remembers Him.

With the rise of mental problems and disorders, such as depression, it is vital for Muslims to understand the importance of this declaration. There is a small chance of a person experiencing a mental issue when they are constantly surrounded and aided by someone that truly loves them. If this is true for a person it is undoubtedly more befitting for Allah, the Exalted, who has promised to be with the one who remembers Him. Acting on this declaration alone would eliminate all mental issues, such as depression. It is the reason why being secluded from others or being amongst others did

not affect the mental state of the righteous predecessors as they were always in the company of Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious that when one obtains the company of Allah, the Exalted, they will overcome all obstacles and difficulties successfully until they reach His proximity in the hereafter.

In addition, out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, has not restricted this declaration in anyway. For example, He did not declare He was only with the righteous or with those who perform specific good deeds. He in fact encompassed every Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith or how many sins they have committed. So a Muslim should never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. But it is important to note the condition mentioned in this Hadith namely, to remember Allah, the Exalted. This is not only remembering Him with one's tongue but more importantly it is to remember Him through one's actions. This is only achieved by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The one who behaves in such a manner will be blessed with the company and support of Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, the more one obeys Allah, the Exalted, the more they will receive His company. What one gives is what they shall receive.

## **A Sound Spiritual Heart**

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 84:

*“When he [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] came to his Lord with a sound heart.”*

It is important for Muslims to strive to soften their heart as it leads to its purification. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, when the spiritual heart is purified all the limbs of the body become purified also. This purification will encourage one to perform righteous deeds and abandon sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

There are many ways to soften the spiritual heart, such as spending time remembering Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue and heart. It is important to involve one's heart by concentrating on what is being recited so that it can become softened. But even if one fails to constantly involve the heart they should never give up. As remembering Allah, the Exalted, only via the tongue is much better than not remembering Him at all. The most superior form of remembering Allah, the Exalted, is reciting the Holy Quran. In order for one to involve their heart in the recitation they should strive to understand what they are reciting by either learning Arabic or by studying

the Holy Quran in a language they understand. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 23:

*“Allah has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance [i.e., mention] of Allah...”*

The next action which can lead to a soft spiritual heart is being kind to the poor, such as poor orphans and widows. Aiding the poor reminds one of the countless blessings Allah, the Exalted, has bestowed on them. The fact that Allah, the Exalted, has made a person self-sufficient and the helper of others can soften the heart as long as the Muslim has a good intention.

Pondering about death often can cause the spiritual heart to become soft. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4258, that Muslims should often remember the destroyer of pleasures meaning, death. This will cause one to take things seriously as they know they must prepare for death and the hereafter. This preparation will lead to a soft spiritual heart.

Muslims can also soften their spiritual heart by visiting graves regularly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him,

advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1569, that Muslims should visit graves as it will remind them of the hereafter. But it is important to note, that this deed will only cause one's spiritual heart to become soft if they ponder over their death, grave and hereafter. Merely visiting graves will make a person's mood more serious but it will not soften their spiritual heart until this self-reflection is done.

Muslims can also contemplate on the past nations who were destroyed by Allah, the Exalted, because of their persistent disobedience. As discussed extensively throughout the Holy Quran and Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the past nations were more powerful, lived longer and obtained more worldly blessings than the people of the modern world yet, as they disobeyed Allah, the Exalted, none of these things benefited them. Their massive and unparalleled empires faded away leaving only a few signs behind in order to warn those who came after them. When a Muslim truly reflects on these things their spiritual heart will soften which will encourage them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

Muslims must strive to soften their hearts through the advice given in this short book. Only then will they be able to focus on the hereafter and adequately prepare for it. The person whose spiritual heart is cured of hardness becomes one whose heart is soft, pure and strong. This means that its purity recognises the difference between truth and falsehood. Its softness encourages the person to act on the truth. Its strength allows one to reject falsehood through struggle and effort. When all these combine within a person through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, they will obtain success in this world and the next. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

*“The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart.”*



## The Great Sacrifice

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 102:

*“And when he reached with him [the age of] exertion, he [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] said, "O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think." He said, "O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, of the steadfast.””*

The first lesson to understand is the importance of patience when facing tests and trials. A Muslim should always remember that those more beloved than them to Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were put through much more severe tests than them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472, that no one has been tested more for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, than him.

Muslims should also bear in mind that no matter what situation they find themselves in it is beneficial for them. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, that if a Muslim faces a difficulty and shows patience they will be rewarded for it. And if they face times of ease and show gratitude they will be rewarded for it. So according to this Hadith every

situation a Muslim encounters is beneficial, even if they do not observe the wisdom behind it. 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.”*

Muslims should also understand that they will encounter a situation which has been decreed for them by Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how they react to it. If they face it with patience they will find an uncountable reward in this world and in the next. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

But if they face it with impatience then they will face more difficulties. So either way they have to face the difficulty so they might as well gain benefit from it.

In addition, a Muslim should not be naive and realize that this world is not Paradise. It is a world created in order to test mankind so it therefore can never be free of tests and trials. When a Muslim recognizes its innate nature facing difficulties and tests does not surprise them as they expect this from the world. The same way a person expects to get attacked if they

find themselves with a wild animal they should expect tests and trials in this world. Mentally preparing in this way will prevent a Muslim being caught off guard which is a cause of impatience.

Another lesson to learn from this great event is that the same way a person cannot gain things in this material world, such as wealth without sacrifice neither can a Muslim obtain the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, without sacrifice. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 2:

*“Do the people think that they will be left to say, “We believe” and they will not be tried?”*

Muslims should be grateful that Allah, the Exalted, does not require them to make big sacrifices like the ones made by the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, and the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. Nor is Allah, the Exalted, demanding Muslims to sacrifice in the way the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did. They sacrificed their wealth, homes, families and lives. Instead, Allah, the Exalted, has entrusted Muslims with a few obligatory duties which require little sacrifice of their time, energy and wealth. If one ponders over the greatness of Paradise they will realise the sacrifices they have been encouraged to make are very small compared to the promised reward. Therefore, Muslims should show gratitude for this by submitting obediently to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

The sacrifice of the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him, is an indication that a Muslim should always be ready to sacrifice their desires, love and wishes for the command of Allah, the Exalted. The ritual of sacrificing animals for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, Muslims perform annually stands for this. It is not simply a sacrifice of an animal but much more. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 37:

*“Their meat will not reach Allah, nor will their blood, but what reaches Him is piety from you. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may glorify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you;...”*

Muslims should adopt the piety mentioned in this verse all year round by placing the commands of Allah, the Exalted, before their desires. Only then will they be able to truly follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, correctly.

Another important lesson to learn from this great event is trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Even in situations which appear inescapable and disastrous, like this great event, a Muslim should always trust in the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Muslims must understand that their knowledge is very limited and that they are extremely short sighted. Meaning, they cannot fully perceive the wisdoms behind the choices of Allah the Exalted. On the other hand, the knowledge and the divine perception of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited. Therefore, a Muslim should trust in the choices of Allah, the Exalted, just like a blind person trusts the guidance of their physical guide. No matter

what the attitude of a Muslim the choice of Allah, the Exalted, will occur so it is best to trust in His wisdom rather than showing impatience which only leads to further trouble.

In addition, it is important to remember the countless examples within one's life when a person desired something only to regret it after obtaining it. And when they disliked something from occurring only to change their mind later on. 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.”*

As destiny is out of people's hands it is important for Muslims to concentrate on the thing which is in their control if they desire to be rescued from difficulties namely, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Allah, the Exalted, has already guaranteed that He will save a Muslim from all difficulties in both worlds. All they have to do is remain obedient to Him. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

*“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”*

It is foolish to stress about the thing which is not in one's control meaning, destiny, and remain heedless to the thing which is in one's control namely, obeying Allah, the Exalted.

## Actualizing Belief

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 111:

*“Indeed, he [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] was of Our believing servants.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13, that a person cannot become a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This does not mean a Muslim will lose their faith if they fail to adopt this characteristic. It means that a Muslim's faith will not be complete until they act on this advice. This Hadith also indicates that a Muslim will not perfect their faith until they also dislike for others what they dislike for themselves. This is supported by another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586. It advises that the Muslim nation is like one body. If one part of the body is in pain the rest of the body shares the pain. This mutual feeling includes loving and hating for others what one loves and hates for themselves.

A Muslim can only achieve this status when their heart is free from evil traits, such as envy. These evil traits will always cause one to desire better for themselves. So in reality, this Hadith is an indication that one should purify their heart by adopting good characteristics, such as being forgiving, and eliminate evil traits, such as envy. This is only possible through learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for Muslims to understand that desiring good for others will cause them to lose out on good things. The treasury of Allah, the Exalted, has no limits so there is no need to adopt a selfish and greedy mentality.

Desiring good for others includes striving to aid others in anyway one can, such as financial or emotional support, in the same way a person would desire others to aid them in their moment of need. Therefore, this love must be shown through actions not just words. Even when a Muslim forbids evil and offers advice which contradicts the desire of others they should do so gently just like they would want others to advise them kindly.

As mentioned earlier, the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of eliminating all bad characteristics which contradict mutual love and care, such as envy. Envy is when a person desires to possess a specific blessing which is only obtainable when it is taken away from someone else. This attitude is a direct challenge to the distribution of blessings chosen by Allah, the Exalted. This is why it is a major sin and leads to the destruction of the envier's good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903. If a Muslim must



desire the lawful things others possess they should wish and supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, to grant them the same or similar thing without the other person losing the blessing. This type of jealousy is lawful and is praiseworthy in aspects of religion. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Muslims should only be jealous of a wealthy person who uses their wealth correctly. And be jealous of a knowledgeable person who uses their knowledge to benefit themselves and others.

A Muslim should not only love for others to obtain lawful worldly blessings but also for them to gain religious blessings in both worlds. In fact, when one wishes this for others it encourages them to strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This type of healthy competition is welcomed in Islam. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 26:

*“...So for this let the competitors compete.”*

This encouragement will also inspire a Muslim to assess themselves in order to find and eliminate any faults in their character. When these two elements combine meaning, striving in sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and purifying one's character, it leads to success in both worlds.

A Muslim must therefore not only claim to love for others what they desire for themselves verbally but show it through their actions. It is hoped that the one who is concerned for others in this way will receive the concern of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930.

## **Strong Believer**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 45:

*“And remember Our servants, Abraham...those of strength...”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4168, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the strong believer is more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, than a weaker believer.

This does not necessarily refer to physical strength which one uses to perform righteous deeds. But it also refers to knowledge and acting on it. When one acts on their knowledge it leads to certainty of faith. The one who possesses strong faith will fulfil their duties according to their knowledge and not blind imitation like the weak believer. A weak believer believes something based on hearsay like if they were told a person is inside their house whereas the strong believer believes and acts based on knowledge for example, if they saw the person inside their house through a window. The stronger one's faith the greater their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This in turn increases their success in both worlds. 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...”*

## Message in a Bottle

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 45:

*“And remember Our servants, Abraham...those of...[religious] vision.”*

It is important for a Muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A Muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when Muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

*“In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you...”*

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden message a Muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

## **Drop and an Ocean**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 46:

*“Indeed, We chose them [including Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] for an exclusive quality: remembrance of the home [of the Hereafter].”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a Muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent Muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.



## The Superior Ones

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 47:

*“And indeed they [including the Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] are, to Us, among the chosen and outstanding.”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4119, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the best people are those who remind others of Allah, the Exalted, when they are observed.

This does not refer to those who adopt an Islamic outward appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf, as many of these people do not remind others of Allah, the Exalted, at all. This Hadith refers to those who learn and act on Islamic knowledge so that they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the purification of one's heart which leads to the purification of their outward limbs. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984. This will cause others to remember Allah, the Exalted, when they observe these righteous Muslims. And this remembrance will only increase when these righteous Muslims speak as they only speak in ways

pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they avoid evil and vain speech and only speak on beneficial matters in respect to the world and the hereafter. This remembrance further increases when one observes their actions as they practically implement the teachings of Islam thereby, acting only in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. For example, they love, dislike, give and withhold only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

## Steadfast on Islam

The next discussion is based on chapter 60 Al Mumtahanah, verse 4:

*“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, “Indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allah. We have denied you...””*

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

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

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a Muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the

hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

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

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

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain

fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

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

## What You Get

During the Heavenly Journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, observed the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, on the seventh Heaven reclining against the House of Allah, the Exalted, in the Heavens, the Bait Al Ma'mur. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 411.

It is important to note that the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, built the House of Allah, the Exalted, in Mecca, the Kaaba, with his son the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 127:

*“And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House...”*

Like many other examples found within the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, this incident indicates a basic teaching of Islam namely, what one gives is what they shall receive. Another example is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

*“So remember Me; I will remember you...”*

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, advises that the one who shows mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by the Creator. Generally speaking, in this material world a person receives things according to their efforts. Yet, strangely some expect to obtain the high ranks of Paradise without any effort. These teachings clearly show that a Muslim will receive blessings and mercy based on their efforts. The more obedient they are to Allah, the Exalted, which 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, the more they will receive in return. There is no doubt that Allah, the Exalted, can give whatever He wants to whomever He wants irrespective of how much they strive in His obedience. But Allah, the Exalted, has set up a system which must be followed namely, striving in His obedience in order to obtain more blessings and mercy. Therefore, each Muslim must reflect and decide how much mercy and blessings of Allah, the Exalted, they desire and then strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, accordingly.

## **Greetings of Peace**

During the Heavenly Journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, met and greeted the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him. The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, asked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to convey his greeting of peace to the Muslim nation. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3462.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 12, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised a good quality found within Islam. Namely, to spread the Islamic greeting of peace to people one knows and to those they do not know.

It is important to act on this good characteristic as nowadays Muslims often only spread the Islamic greeting of peace to those they know. It is important to spread it to all as this leads to love between people and strengthens Islam. In fact, this characteristic leads to Paradise according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 194.

A Muslim should never forget that they will receive a minimum of ten rewards for every greeting of peace they extend to others even if others fail to reply to them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5195.



Finally, a Muslim should fulfill the Islamic greeting of peace correctly by demonstrating this peace in their other speech and actions towards others by keeping their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others. This is in fact, the definition of a true Muslim and believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

## **Sign of Love**

During the Heavenly the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, met and greeted the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him. The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, asked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to convey his greeting of peace to the Muslim nation and to tell them that Paradise is a flat treeless plain and the seeds (for growing trees) are glorifying Allah, the Exalted, (SubhanAllah), praising Allah, the Exalted, (Alhumdulillah) declaring that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, the Exalted, and declaring the greatness of Allah, the Exalted, (Allahu Akbar). This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3462.

A sign of truly loving Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is that a Muslim will mention Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, often. It is commonly known that the one a person often remembers is the one they love, the greater the love the greater the remembrance. This is indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 826, which advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used to remember Allah, the Exalted, in every moment. This is a sign of the deep love the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has for Allah, the Exalted. Those who prove their love by remembering Allah, the Exalted, often have been given the glad tidings of forgiveness and a great reward. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 35:

*“...and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.”*

## **What is Sacred**

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2129, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, made Mecca a sanctuary and he, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, made Medina a sanctuary.

Muslims are quite good at respecting the places and days which Allah, the Exalted, has made sacred but they often overlook the other things which He has made sacred.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 67, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the blood, property and honor of a Muslim are sacred in Islam.

This Hadith, like many others, teaches Muslims that success can only be obtained when one fulfills the rights of Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayers, and the rights of people. One without the other is not good enough.

A true believer and Muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims not to harm others through their actions or words.

A Muslim must respect the possessions of others and not try to wrongfully acquire them for example, in a legal case. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 353, warns that someone who does this will go to Hell even if the thing they acquired was as insignificant as a twig of a tree. Muslims should only use the possessions of others according to their wishes and return them in a way pleasing to its owner.

The honor of a Muslim should not be violated through actions or speech, such as backbiting or slander. A Muslim should instead defend the honor of others whether in their presence or absence as this will lead to their protection from the fire of Hell. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931.

To conclude, one should avoid wronging the self, possessions or honor of others by treating others exactly how they desire others to treat them. Just like one loves this for themselves they should love it for others and prove this through their actions and speech. This is the sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

## **Avoiding Corruption**

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2129, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, supplicated for blessings in the financial transactions of the people of Medina just like the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, did so for the people of Mecca.

Muslims must understand that the blessings of Allah, the Exalted, will only descend on their financial dealings when they conduct their business in the correct way.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, warns that when the general public cheats each other financially Allah, the Exalted, punishes them by appointing oppressive leaders over them. One aspect of this oppression is corruption which causes the general public great distress. The same Hadith warns that when the general public break their covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then they will be overpowered by their enemies who will illegally confiscate their wealth and property from them. Again, this is an aspect of corruption where people of influence, such as government officials, freely take the belongings of others without any fear of the consequences. When the general public becomes corrupt then their leaders and other people in influential social positions are inspired to act in the same way believing this behaviour is accepted by the general public. This leads to corruption on a national level. But if the general public obeyed Allah, the Exalted, and avoided mistreating others through corruption then their leaders and those in an influential social position

would not dare act in a corrupt way full well knowing the general public would not stand for it. And according to the Hadith quoted earlier, if the general public remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, He would protect them from corrupt officials by appointing people into influential positions who are just in their affairs.

Instead of taking the immature path of blaming others for the widespread corruption observed in the world Muslims should truly reflect on their own behaviour and if necessary adjust their attitude. Otherwise, corruption in society will only increase with the passing of time. No one should believe that as they are not in an influential social position they have no effect on the corruption which occurs in society. As proven by this discussion corruption occurs because of the negative behaviour of the general public and it therefore can only be removed by the good behaviour of the general public. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

*“...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...”*

## **Outcome on Judgement Day**

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3349, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the first person to be dressed (in honor) will be the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him.

If one desires to receive the blessings of Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgement then they must live and die on His sincere obedience.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7232, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people will be resurrected on Judgment Day in the same state they died on Earth.

This means that if a person dies on good they will be resurrected on good. But if they die on evil they will be raised in an evil way.

A Muslim should not live in heedlessness by believing just because they have faith in Islam it guarantees they will die and therefore be raised in a good state on Judgment Day. If they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then die in this state without sincerely repenting then they



will be raised in an evil way. It does not take a scholar to determine what will happen to this person on Judgment Day.

From this Hadith one can understand that the way they will die will be in the same state they have lived. Meaning, if they lived in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will die in a good state and therefore be raised in a good state which includes being raised with the righteous as they practically followed in their footsteps. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

A Muslim should therefore not walk the path to Hell by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and believe that they will somehow be raised with the pious and end up in Paradise.

## **Holy Prophet Lut, peace be upon him**

### **Total Purification**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 82:

*“But the answer of his [Prophet Lut, peace be upon him] people was only that they said, "Evict them from your city! Indeed, they are men who keep themselves pure.”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the five obligatory prayers erase one's sins just like taking a bath five times a day would clean the body of dirt.

The first thing to note is that this Hadith refers to minor sins only as major sins require sincere repentance.

In addition, it is important for Muslims to not only purify their outer beings of minor sins by establishing the five obligatory prayers but also fulfill the other aspect of purification namely, inner purification. This is indicated by the fact that the five obligatory prayers were spread across the day instead of being put together. Meaning, a Muslim should repeatedly inwardly turn to Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day just like their body turns to Allah, the Exalted, five times a day through the obligatory prayers. This inner purification involves correcting one's intention so that they are only perform actions in order to please Allah, the Exalted. This is the foundation of Islam and is what Allah, the Exalted, assesses when judging an action. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Those who act for the sake of other people will be told to gain their reward from them on Judgment Day which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Finally, this inner purification includes learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that one removes the bad characteristics they possess, such as envy and instead adopt good characteristics, such as patience. The outer purification is important but if a Muslim desires to achieve success and overcome all difficulties in both worlds they must purify their inner being as well as their outer being.

## **Relying on Others**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 83:

*“So We saved him [Prophet Lut, peace be upon him] and his family, except for his wife; she was of those who remained [with the evildoers].”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that nobility does not lie in one's lineage as all people are the descendants of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and he was made of dust. Therefore, people should give up boasting about their relatives and lineage.

It is important to understand that even though some ignorant Muslims have adopted the attitude of other nations by creating castes and sects thereby believing some people are superior to others based on these groups Islam declared a simple criterion for superiority namely, piety. Meaning, the more a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience the greater they are in rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

This verse destroys all other standards which have been created by ignorant people such as one's race, ethnicity, wealth, gender or social status.

In addition, if a Muslim is proud of a pious person in their lineage they should correctly demonstrate this belief by praising Allah, the Exalted, and following in their footsteps. Boasting about others without following in their footsteps will not help someone in either this world or the next. This has been made clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2945.

Finally, the one who is proud of others but fails to follow in their footsteps is indirectly dishonoring them as the outside world will observe their bad character and assume their righteous ancestor behaved in the same manner. These people should therefore strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because of this reason. These are like those people who adopt the outward traditions and advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf yet, fail to adopt his inner character. The outside world will only think negatively about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they observe the bad character of these Muslims.

## Caring for Others

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 77:

*“And when Our messengers, [the angels – in the form of men], came to Lot, he was anguished for them and felt for them great discomfort...”*

This indicates the genuine sincerity the Holy Prophet Lut, peace be upon him, had for others.

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 general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themselves.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing

the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themselves in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

*“...Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them...”*

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

*“...And do good as Allah has done good to you...”*



## **Ease with Difficulties**

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 77:

*“And when Our messengers, [the angels – in the form of men], came to Lot, he was anguished for them and felt for them great discomfort and said, “This is a trying day.””*

In a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the importance of understanding that every difficulty a person faces will be followed by ease. This reality has also been mentioned in the Holy Quran for example, chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 7:

*“...Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease [i.e., relief].”*

It is important for Muslims to understand this reality as it gives rise to patience and even contentment. Being uncertain over the changes in circumstances can lead one to impatience, ingratitude and even towards unlawful things, such as unlawful provision. But the one who firmly believes all difficulties will eventually be replaced with ease will patiently wait for this change fully trusting in the teachings of Islam. This patience is much loved by Allah, the Exalted, and greatly rewarded. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 146:

*“...And Allah loves the steadfast.”*

This is the reason Allah, the Exalted, has mentioned numerous examples within the Holy Quran when difficult situations were followed by ease and blessings. For example, the following verse of the Holy Quran mentions the great difficulty the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, faced from his people and how Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the great flood. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 76:

*“And [mention] Noah, when he called [to Allah] before [that time], so We responded to him and saved him and his family from the great affliction [i.e., the flood].”*

Another example is found in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 69:

*“We [i.e., Allah] said, “O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.”*

The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, faced a great difficulty in the form of a great fire but Allah, the Exalted, made it cool and peaceful for him.

These examples and many more have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that Muslims understand that a moment of difficulty will eventually be followed by ease for those who obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Therefore, it is important for Muslims to study these Islamic teachings in order to observe the countless cases where Allah, the Exalted, granted ease to His obedient servants after they faced difficulties. If Allah, the Exalted, has saved His obedient servants from great difficulties mentioned in the divine teachings then He can and will save the obedient Muslims facing smaller difficulties also.

## Divine Assistance

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verses 80-81:

*"He [Prophet Lut, peace be upon him] said, "If only I had against you some power or could take refuge in a strong support." They [the angels] said, "O Lot, indeed we are messengers of your Lord; [therefore], they will never reach you..."*

The Prophet Lut, peace be upon him, genuinely sought refuge from the evil of his nation through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

This event teaches Muslims that whenever they encounter a difficult situation they should remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, trusting that He will provide them a way out of it even if this seems impossible at the time. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

*"...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out."*

A Muslim should understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best for His servants even if the wisdoms behind the difficulty are not obvious. It

is a person's reaction which either leads to blessings or the anger of Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to reflect on the countless examples in their own life where they believed something was bad only to change their mind later on and vice versa. This is just like when a person takes a bitter medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. Even though the medicine is bitter they still take it believing it will benefit them. It is strange how a Muslim can trust a doctor whose knowledge is limited and who is not absolutely certain the bitter medicine will benefit them and fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge is infinite and when He only decrees the best for His servants.

A Muslim should understand the difference between wishful thinking and trust in Allah, the Exalted. The person who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, and then expects Him to help them in difficulties is a wishful thinker. The one who will gain the help of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated in this great event, is the one who sincerely strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience and then trusts His judgment without complaining or questioning His choice.

## **Life is Short**

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 81:

*“...Indeed, their appointment [the destruction of the nation of Prophet Lut, peace be upon him] is [for] the morning. Is not the morning near?”*

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a Muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may

find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. 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. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach Muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

*“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.”*

*But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”*

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.



## The Best Slavery

The next discussion is based on chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 72:

*“By your life, indeed they [the nation of Prophet Lut, peace be upon him] were, in their intoxication, wandering blindly.”*

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

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

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

## Facing Consequences

The next discussion is based on chapter 15 Al Hijr, verses 74-77:

*“And We made the highest part [of the city] its lowest and rained upon them [the nation of Prophet Lut, peace be upon him] stones of hard clay. Indeed in that are signs for those who discern. And indeed, they [i.e., those ruined cities] are [situated] on an established road. Indeed in that is a sign for the believers.”*

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A Muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a Muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and

others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

## Wisdom and Knowledge

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 74:

*“And to Lot We gave wisdom and 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. This is in fact the wisdom mentioned in this verse.

## Social Trends

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verses 74-75:

*“...We saved him [Prophet Lut, peace be upon him] from the city that was committing wicked deeds. Indeed, they were a people of evil, defiantly disobedient...Indeed, he was of the righteous.”*

Allah, the Exalted, saved the Holy Prophet Lut, peace be upon him, even though he was completely surrounded by evil practices as he remained firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil tries to convince Muslims to always observe those who are worse than them in behaviour in order to justify their lack of striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and improving their character and behaviour for the better. For example, a Muslim who offers their obligatory prayers once in a while will observe someone who does not pray at all in order to make themselves feel better. A thief will look at a murderer and convince themselves stealing is not so bad. The examples are endless. It is very strange how these Muslims so easily observe those who appear worse than them in order to justify their lack of effort in obeying Allah, the Exalted, but these same people will not observe those who are in a worse off position than them when they face difficulties. For example, the person who suffers from back pain will not observe the one who is physically disabled so that it prevents them from complaining. This attitude has specifically been advised by the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513.

In addition, if observing those who appear worse in their behaviour does not save one from punishment in a worldly court, such as a thief being pardoned by a judge because there are many murderers in the world, how can one imagine this excuse will hold up in the court of Allah, the Exalted?

Muslims should therefore avoid this trap of the Devil by observing those who appear better than them so that they are inspired to improve their character and behaviour progressively for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This is what Allah, the Exalted, demands meaning, He does not demand perfection.



## **Fulfilling Trusts**

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 162:

*“[Prophet Lut, peace be upon him, said] Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy messenger.”*

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.

## Effects of Intention

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 164:

*“[Prophet Lut, peace be upon him, said] And I do not ask you for it any payment. My payment is only from the Lord of the worlds.”*

One of the main reasons why people who do good things, such as buying gifts for others, do not receive the same level of respect and love from people than some who do not do these things is because of their intention. When these people perform righteous deeds in respect to people, such as visiting the sick, they do so either for the sake of people meaning, to please them or they mix this intention by also aiming to please Allah, the Exalted. First of all, the one who acts for the sake of people will gain no reward from Allah, the Exalted. They will be told to gain their reward from the people they acted for on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Scholars are divided on whether those who mix their intention by aiming to please Allah, the Exalted, and people will receive a partial reward or none at all. In order to be on the safe side a wise Muslim should only act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

On the other hand, the other people who gain more respect and love from others do so because they solely act for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. When they treat others kindly they do not do it for the sake of people. Because of their sincerity Allah, the Exalted, places more love

and respect in the hearts of the people compared to those who do more acts of kindness to people but are less sincere in their deeds.

So if people desire reward from Allah, the Exalted, and respect from people they should correct their intention and only perform righteous deeds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. One sign of this correct intention is that this person will aim to please Allah, the Exalted, even if it displeases people. Meaning, they do not pay attention to the attitude and reactions of people.

## Objecting to Evil

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 168:

*“He [Prophet Lut, peace be upon him] said, “Indeed, I am, toward your deed, of those who detest [it].””*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised the importance of objecting to evil things in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4340. This Hadith clearly shows that it is a duty on all Muslims to object to all forms of evil according to their strength and means. The lowest level, as mentioned in this Hadith, is rejecting the evil with one's heart.

This shows internally approving evil actions is one of the ugliest of those things which are forbidden. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4345, that the one who is present when an evil is committed and denounces it is like the one who was not present. But the one who was absent and approved the evil deed is like the one who was present when it was committed.

The first two aspects of objecting to evil, mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion, are through one's physical actions and speech. This is

only a duty on a Muslim who has the strength to do so for example, they will not be harmed by their actions or words.

It is important to note, objecting to evil with one's hand does not refer to fighting. It refers to correcting the evil actions of others, such as returning the rights of someone which have been unlawfully violated. The one who is in a position to do so yet, refrains from doing so has been warned of a punishment in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4338.

The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised Muslims in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2191, that they should not fear the creation in respect to speaking the truth. In fact, the one who allows the fear of the creation to prevent them from objecting to evil things has been described as the one who hates himself and will be criticized by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4008. It is important to note, this does not refer to the one who remains silent out of fear of being harmed as this is an acceptable excuse but it refers to the person who remains silent because of the status people hold in their eyes.

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4341, advises that a person can give up objecting to evil things through their actions and speech when others obey their greed, follow their incorrect opinions and desires and when they prefer the material world over the hereafter. It does not take a scholar to conclude this time has arrived. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 105.

*“O you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided...”*

But it is important to note, a Muslim should continue with this important duty in respect to their dependents as this is a duty on them according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928, and in respect to those they feel physically and verbally safe from, as this is the superior attitude.

Objecting to evil things which are apparent is what the main Hadith under discussion refers to. Meaning, it does not grant permission to Muslims to spy on others in order to find evil things to object to. Spying and anything associated with it in this respect are forbidden. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

*“O you who have believed...do not spy...”*

It is important to note, that a Muslim must object to evil according to the teachings of Islam and not their own desires. A Muslim may believe they are acting for sake of Allah, the Exalted, when they are not. This is proven when they object to evil in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, what is considered a good deed may well become a sin because of this negative attitude.

A Muslim must object to evil in a gentle and fair way preferably in private in accordance to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The opposite of these characteristics will only push people away from sincerely repenting and may lead to further sins as a result of angering them.



## Superiority and Success

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 169:

*"[Prophet Lut, peace be upon him, said] My Lord, save me and my family from [the consequence of] what they do."*

Even though the number of Muslims have increased over time it is obvious that the strength of Muslims has only decreased. Each Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith believes in the authenticity of the Holy Quran as doubting it would cause them to lose their faith. In the following verse Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to obtaining superiority and success which would remove the weakness and grief Muslims are experiencing all around the world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

*"So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers."*

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Muslims only need to become true believers in order to achieve this superiority and success in both worlds. True belief involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, 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 includes the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and those towards people, such as loving for others what one loves for themselves which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This requires one to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Through this attitude was success and superiority granted to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And if Muslims desire to achieve it then they must return to this rightly guided attitude. As Muslims believe in the Holy Quran they should understand this simple teaching and act on it.

## Learning from Others

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 169-174:

*"[Prophet Lut, peace be upon him, said] My Lord, save me and my family from [the consequence of] what they do." So We saved him and his family, all, Except an old woman among those who remained behind. Then We destroyed the others...Indeed in that is a sign, but most of them were not to be believers."*

It is important for a Muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a Muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A Muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*“...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.”*”

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

## **The Nation's Strength**

The next discussion is based on chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 30:

*"He [Prophet Lut, peace be upon him] said, "My Lord, support me against the corrupting people.""*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4297, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a day would soon come when other nations would attack the Muslim nation and even though they would be great in number they would be deemed insignificant by the world. Allah, the Exalted, would remove the fear of Muslims from the hearts' of the other nations. This would occur because of the Muslim nation's love for the material world and their hatred for death.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were small in number yet, they overcame entire nations whereas the Muslims today are greater in number yet, have no social or political influence in the world. This is because the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, lived their lives according to the teachings of Islam thereby, favouring and preparing for the hereafter over enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. Whereas, most of the Muslims today have adopted the opposite mind-set. It is important to understand that the root of all sins is the love of the material world. This is because any sin which is committed is done out of love and desire for it. The material world can

be split into four aspects: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their relatives and friends. It is in the excess pursuit of these things which lead to sins, such as earning unlawful wealth out of love for fortune. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that love for wealth and authority is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction two hungry wolves would cause if they were let loose on a herd of sheep. Whenever people seek the excess of these aspects of the material world it always leads to disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. When this occurs the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is removed which leads to nothing but trouble.

Even though, some Muslims believe pursuing the excess things of the material world is harmless it is something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3158. He warned that he did not fear poverty for Muslims. What he feared was that Muslims would pursue the excess of this material world, such as excess wealth, and this would cause them to compete with each other over it and this would lead to their destruction. As warned in this Hadith this was the behaviour of the past nations.

As the material world is limited it is obvious that people would have to compete over it if they desired more than their necessities. This competition would cause them to adopt the characteristics which contradict the character of a true Muslim, such as envy and enmity for others. They would stop caring for each other as they are too busy competing in gathering and hoarding the material world. And they would contradict the advice given in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6011, which advises that Muslims should act like one body when any part of the body suffers from an illness the rest of the body shares in the pain. This competition would drive a Muslim to stop loving for others what they love for themselves which is a characteristic of a true believer

according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, as they desire to outdo their fellow Muslims in worldly things. Persisting on this competition will cause a Muslim to love, hate, give and withhold all for the sake of the material world instead of for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This competition is the difference between the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and many of the Muslims today.

If Muslims desire to regain the strength and influence Islam once had they must strive and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over striving for obtaining and hoarding the excess of this material world. This must occur from an individual level until it affects the whole nation.

## **Gratitude Prevents Punishment**

The next discussion is based on chapter 54 Al Qamar, verses 34-35:

*“Indeed, We sent upon them a storm of stones, except the family of Lot - We saved them before dawn. As favor from Us. Thus do We reward he who is grateful.”*

A Muslim must ensure they fulfill all three aspects of gratitude so that they avoid becoming a denier of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who is ungrateful in reality, scorns the One who granted them the blessings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

*“...And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.”*

The three aspects of gratitude are to internally acknowledge Allah, the Exalted, as the sole Creator and Provider of all blessings. An aspect of this is to correct one's intention so that they only perform actions to please Allah, the Exalted. The next aspect is to praise Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue. And the final and highest aspect is to practically show gratitude through one's actions by using each blessing as prescribed by Islam in order to please 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]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'”*

As true gratitude leads to an increase in blessings Muslims should fear that showing ingratitude may cause the blessings they possess to either be taken away from them or for their blessings to be used against them by becoming a burden and a curse for them in both worlds. It is important to note, even if a Muslim becomes truly grateful they will still face tests and difficulties as they are guaranteed. But if they behave in the correct way they will be guided through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and body in this world and a great reward in the hereafter.

## **Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him**

### **Blessed Places**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 125:

*“...And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, [saying], "Purify My House for those who perform circumambulation and those who are staying [there] for worship and those who bow and prostrate [in prayer].”*”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most beloved places to Allah, the Exalted, are the Mosques and the most hated places to Him are the market places.

Islam does not prohibit Muslims from going to places other than the Mosques. Nor does it command them to always inhabit the Mosques. But it is important that they prioritize attending Mosques for the congregational prayers and attending religious gatherings over visiting the market places unnecessarily.

When a need arises there is no harm to attend other places, such as shopping centers, but a Muslim should avoid going to them unnecessarily as they are places where sins more often occur. Whereas, the Mosques are meant to be a sanctuary from sins and a comfortable place to obey Allah, the Exalted, in. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Just like a student benefits from a library as it is an environment created for studying similarly, Muslims can benefit from Mosques as their very purpose is to encourage Muslims to obtain and act on useful knowledge so that they can obey Allah, the Exalted.

Not only should a Muslim prioritize the Mosques over other places but they should encourage others such as their children to do the same. In fact, it is an excellent place for the youth to avoid sins, crimes and bad company, which lead to nothing but trouble and regret in both worlds.

## Good Spending

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 127:

*“And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2482, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that all lawful spending gains reward from Allah, the Exalted, except the wealth which is spent on worldly buildings.

This includes all spending on lawful things which is free from excessiveness, waste or extravagance. Spending on construction which is necessary is not included in this Hadith but the construction which is beyond one's needs is. This is disliked as spending on construction easily leads to waste and extravagance. In addition, the one who spends wealth on construction is less likely to donate charity and spend in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Also this behavior often leads a Muslim to adopt hopes for a long life as the one who believes their stay in this world is extremely short will not waste energy and wealth on constructing a beautiful home. The greater one's hope for a long life the less righteous deeds they will perform believing they can always perform good deeds in the future. It also causes one to delay sincere repentance believing they can always change for the better in the future. Finally, it

causes one to dedicate more efforts to the world in order to create a more comfortable life for their supposed long stay in this world.

Actively taking part in unnecessary construction occupies one's time which prevents them from performing voluntary righteous deeds, such as fasting and the voluntary night prayer out of extreme fatigue. It also prevents them from striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge.

Finally, in reality taking part in unnecessary construction never ends. Meaning, the moment a person completes one part of their home they move to the next until the cycle repeats itself.

Therefore, Muslims should adhere to what is within their necessity in respect to all things not just construction so that they can avoid these negative consequences.

## Guiding to Good

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 128:

*“Our Lord, and make us [Prophets Ibrahim and Ismaeel, peace be upon them] Muslims [in submission] to You and from our descendants a Muslim nation [in submission] to You...”*

As proven by the Holy Prophet Ismaeel and his father the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon them, both aspects of this supplication can only be fulfilled when one leads by example.

It is important for all Muslims, especially parents, to act on what they advise to others. It is obvious if one turns the pages of history that those who acted on what they preached had a much more positive effect on others compared to those who did not lead by example. The best example being the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who not only practiced what he preached but adhered to those teachings more strictly than anyone else. Only with this attitude will Muslims especially, parents have a positive impact on others. For example, if a mother warns her children not to lie as it is a sin but often lies in front of them her children are unlikely to act on her advice. A person's actions will always have more of an impact on others than their speech. It is important to note that this does not mean one needs to be perfect before advising others. It means they should sincerely strive to act on their own advice before advising others. The Holy Quran has

made it clear in the following verse that Allah, the exalted, hates this behaviour. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, that the a person who commanded good but refrained from it themselves and prohibited evil yet acted on it themselves will be punished in severely Hell. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

*“Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not do.”*

So it is vital for all Muslims to strive to act on their advice themselves then advise others to do the same. Leading by example is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and is the best way to affect others in a positive way.

## Following the Truth

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 128:

*“Our Lord...show us [Prophets Ibrahim and Ismaeel, peace be upon them] our rites [of worship and obedience]...”*

Muslims should not follow and adopt the customary practices of non-Muslims. The more Muslims do this the less they will follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is quite evident in this day and age as many Muslims have adopted the cultural practices of other nations which has caused them to become distant from the teachings of Islam. For example, one only needs to observe the modern Muslim wedding to observe how many non-Muslim cultural practices have been adopted by Muslims. What makes this worse is that many Muslims cannot differentiate between Islamic practices based on the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Because of this non-Muslims cannot differentiate between them either which has caused great problems for Islam. For example, honour killings is a cultural practice which has nothing to do with Islam yet because of the ignorance of Muslims and their habit of adopting non-Muslim cultural practices Islam is blamed every time an honour killing occurs in society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, removed the social barriers in the form of casts and brotherhoods in order to unite people yet ignorant Muslims have resurrected them by adopting the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Simply put, the more cultural practices Muslims adopt the less they will act on the Holy Quran



and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

## **Fulfilling Your Duty to Others**

The next discussion is based on chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 39:

*“[Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said] Praise to Allah, who has granted to me in old age Ishmael...”*

A Muslim must truly praise Allah, the Exalted, when they are granted children by raising them according to the teachings of Islam so that they become a source of blessings for them in both worlds.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2409, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person is a guardian and responsible for the things under their care.

The greatest thing a Muslim is a guardian of is their faith. Therefore, they must strive to fulfill its responsibility by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This guardianship also includes every blessing one has been granted by Allah, the Exalted, which includes external things such as wealth and internal things such as one's body. A Muslim must fulfill the responsibility of these things by using them in the way prescribed by Islam. For example, a Muslim should only use their eyes to look at lawful things and their tongue to utter only lawful and useful words.

This guardianship also extends to others within one's life such as relatives and friends. A Muslim must fulfill this responsibility by fulfilling their rights such as providing for them and gently commanding good and forbidding evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should not cut off from others especially over worldly issues. Instead, they should continue to treat them kindly hoping they will change for the better. This guardianship includes one's children. A Muslim must guide them by leading by example as this by far is the most effective way in guiding children. They must obey Allah, the Exalted, practically as discussed earlier and teach their children to do the same. A separate free eBook series titled: Raising Pious Children, has been produced which discusses this aspect in detail and can be viewed using the following link:

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:1122ebc4-72ab-4384-9198-7a93e45f53b3>

To conclude, according to this Hadith everyone has some sort of responsibility they have been entrusted with. So they should gain and act on the relevant knowledge in order to fulfill them as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

## **Fulfilling Promises**

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 54:

*“And mention in the Book, Ishmael. Indeed, he was true to his promise...”*

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?

## Commanding Good and Forbidding Evil

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 55:

*“And he [Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him] used to enjoin on his people...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2686, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that failing to fulfill the important duty of commanding good and forbidding evil can be understood with the example of a boat with two levels full of people. The people on the lower level keep disturbing the people on the upper level whenever they desire to access water. So they decide to drill a hole in the lower level so that they can access water directly. If the people on the upper level fail to stop them they will all surely drown.

It is important for Muslims to never give up commanding good and forbidding evil according to their knowledge in a gentle way. A Muslim should never believe that as long as they obey Allah, the Exalted, other misguided people will not be able to affect them in a negative way. A good apple will eventually get affected when placed with rotten apples. Similarly, the Muslim who fails to command others to do good will eventually be effected by their negative behavior whether it is subtle or apparent. Even if the wider society has become heedless one should never give up advising their dependents such as their family as not only will their negative behavior affect them more but this is a duty on all

Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. Even if a Muslim is ignored by others they should discharge their duty by persistently advising them in a gentle way which is supported by strong evidence and knowledge. Only in this way will they be protected from their negative effects and pardoned on the Day of Judgment. But if they only care about themselves and ignore the actions of others it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance.

## **Establishing Faith**

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 55:

*“And he [Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him] used to enjoin on his people prayer...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the difference between belief and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers.

In this day and age this has become far too common. Many give up their obligatory prayers for trivial reasons all of which are undoubtedly rejected. If the obligation of the prayer has not been removed for the one who is engaging in battle how can it be removed from anyone else? Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 102:

*“And when you [i.e., the commander of an army] are among them and lead them in prayer, let a group of them stand [in prayer] with you and let them carry their arms. And when they have prostrated, let them be [in position] behind you and have the other group come forward which has not [yet] prayed and let them pray with you, taking precaution and carrying their arms...”*

Neither is the traveller or the sick exempt from offering their obligatory prayers. The traveller has been advised to reduce the amount of cycles in some of the obligatory prayers in order to reduce the burden for them but they have not been exempt from offering them. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 101:

*“And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer...”*

The sick have been advised to perform dry ablution if contact with water will harm them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 6:

*“...But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it...”*

In addition, the sick can perform the obligatory prayer in a way which is easier for them. Meaning, if they cannot stand they are allowed to sit and if they cannot sit they can lay down and offer the obligatory prayer. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 372. But again, no complete exemption is granted to the sick unless one is mentally ill which prevents them from comprehending the obligation of the prayer.



The other major issue is that some Muslims delay their obligatory prayers and offer them beyond their correct times. This clearly contradicts the Holy Quran as the believers have been described as those who offer their obligatory prayers on time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 103:

*“...Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.”*

Many believe that the following verse of the Holy Quran refers to those who unnecessarily delay their obligatory prayers. This has been discussed in Tafseer Ibn Kathir, volume 10, pages 603-604. Chapter 107 Al Ma’un, verses 4-5:

*“So woe to those who pray. [But] who are heedless of their prayer.”*

Here Allah, the Exalted, has clearly cursed those who have adopted this evil trait. How can one find success in this world or the next if they have been removed from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 512, that delaying one's obligatory prayers unnecessarily is a sign of hypocrisy. The Holy Quran has made it clear that one of the main reasons people will enter Hell is failing to establish the obligatory prayers. Chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 42-43:

*"[And asking them], "What put you into Saqar?" They will say, "We were not of those who prayed."*

Abandoning the obligatory prayers is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2621, that whoever commits this sin has disbelieved in Islam.

In addition, no other good deed will benefit a Muslim until their obligatory prayers are not established. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 553, clearly warns that one's good deeds are destroyed if they miss the afternoon obligatory prayer. If this is the case for abandoning one obligatory prayer can one imagine the penalty of abandoning them all?

Observing the obligatory prayers at their correct times has been advised to be one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252. From this one can determine that delaying the obligatory prayers beyond their time or completely missing them is one of the most hated deeds by Allah, the Exalted.

It is an important duty for all elders to encourage the children under their care to offer the obligatory prayers from a young age so that they establish them before it becomes legally binding on them. Those adults that delay this and wait until children are older have failed in this extremely important duty. The children who were only encouraged to offer the obligatory prayers when it became obligatory on them very rarely established them quickly. In most cases, it takes years for them to fulfil this important duty correctly. And the blame falls on the elders of the family especially, the parents. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495, that families most encourage their children to offer the obligatory prayers when they turn seven years old.

Another major issue many Muslims face is that they may offer the obligatory prayers but fail to do so correctly. For example, many do not complete the stages of the prayer correctly and instead rush through it. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 757, clearly warns that the one who prays like this has not prayed at all. Meaning, they are not recorded as a person who offered their prayer and therefore their obligation has not been fulfilled. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 265, clearly warns that the prayer of the one who does not settle in each position of the prayer is not accepted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the one who does not bow or prostrate correctly in the prayer as the worse thief. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Muwatta Malik, Book number 9, Hadith number 75. Unfortunately, many Muslims who have spent decades offering their obligatory and many voluntary prayers like this will find that none of them have counted and thus they

will be treated as one who did not fulfil their obligation. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1313.

The Holy Quran indicates the importance of offering the obligatory prayers with congregation usually at a Mosque. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

*“...and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”*

In fact, due to this verse and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, some reliable scholars have declared this obligatory on Muslim men. For example, one Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 550, clearly warns that the Muslims who would not offer their obligatory prayers with congregation at the Mosque were considered hypocrites by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even threatened to burn the houses of the men who failed to perform their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation without a valid excuse. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1482. Those Muslims who are in a position to perform this important deed should do so. They should not fool themselves into claiming they are performing other righteous deeds such as helping their family with house chores. Even though, this is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 676, but it is important not to rearrange the importance of his traditions according to one's desires. Whoever does this is not following his traditions they are only following their own desires even if they are performing a righteous deed. In fact, this same Hadith concludes by advising that when it was time for the

obligatory prayer the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would leave for the Mosque.

## The Obligatory Charity

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 55:

*“And he [Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him] used to enjoin on his people...zakah...”*

Severe warnings over failing to donate the obligatory charity have been given in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that the person who does not donate their obligatory charity will encounter a large poisonous snake which will continuously bite them on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 180:

*“And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection...”*

According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, when the members of a society withhold the obligatory charity Allah, the Exalted, will withhold rain and if it was not for the animals He would not

let it rain at all. This major sin is therefore one potential cause of the long periods of drought some nations face.

Not offering the obligatory charity is a sign of extreme greed as it is only an extremely tiny portion of one's wealth namely, 2.5%. It is clear that the miser is far from Allah, the Exalted, the people and close to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

Muslims must understand that donating the obligatory charity does not only protect them from punishment but it leads to blessings in one's life which far outweigh the wealth they donated. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6592, that charity does not decrease one's wealth. This means that when one donates Allah, the Exalted, compensates them. For example, He provides them with business opportunities which cause them to gain more wealth than they donated. This repayment is confirmed in many places of the Holy Quran for example, chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 11:

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He will multiply it for him and he will have a noble reward?”*

In addition, this Hadith could indicate that as each person's provision is pre-recorded whatever wealth which is destined to be spent on them will never change irrespective of how much wealth a person donates. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748.

A Muslim must therefore avoid the wrath of Allah, the Exalted, by donating a very small fraction of their wealth in the form of the obligatory charity while hoping for a reward which is much greater both in this world and the next.



## The Most Virtuous

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 55:

*“And he [Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him]...was to his Lord pleasing.”*

Muslims should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him, by adopting the characteristics which are beloved to Allah, the Exalted. For example, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1660, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned the two most virtuous people. The first is the one who sincerely strives in the way of Allah, the Exalted.

This includes striving against one's own evil desires and the evil desires of others and instead remaining firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This includes fulfilling one's duties towards Allah, the Exalted, as described and one's duties towards people for example, striving in this material world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And it includes gently commanding good and forbidding evil according to Islamic knowledge. A Muslim will not fulfill this Hadith until they fulfill both aspects of their duties.

The second person mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the one who secludes themselves from society thereby, keeping their evil away from people and remains firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim is not allowed to behave in this manner if they possess dependents as neglecting them is a sin. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692.

In addition, one should not avoid people in order to be safe from their evil they should instead do so to keep their own evil away from people. As the former attitude can lead to pride where a person believes they are righteous while all others are sinful. It is important to remember that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take someone to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Reducing socializing with people can lead to great good as it reduces the chances of a Muslim committing sins through their speech and actions.

In addition, it will free their time up to learn and act on Islamic knowledge which leads to true and lasting success in both worlds. But the more one unnecessarily interacts with others the more chance of committing sins and the more preoccupied they will become with worldly things. Benefit might be obtained by interacting with people but in this day and age it is far safer to avoid socializing unnecessarily.

## **Destiny is Like Medicine**

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 101:

*“So We gave him good tidings of a forbearing boy [Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him].”*

It is important for Muslims to understand a simple thing which can aid them with patiently facing destiny and the difficulties it brings. A person happily takes a bitter medicine which their doctor prescribes fully trusting in their knowledge, experience and choice all the while believing that their doctor knows what is best for them. This is true even though they are only human and prone to errors. Yet, many Muslims fail to place this same level of trust in Allah, the Exalted, even though His knowledge is infinite and His choices always the wisest. Muslims should try to accept destiny and the troubles it brings just like they take the bitter medicine without complaining knowing it is best for them. They should understand that the troubles and difficulties they face are best for them even if they do not understand or observe the wisdoms in them just like they do not understand the science behind the bitter medicine they happily take. Even though in most cases, they will never understand the science behind the bitter medicine they take a time will certainly come, whether in this world or in the hereafter, when the wisdom behind the bitter difficulties they faced will be revealed to them. So a Muslim should anticipate this time patiently knowing all will be revealed shortly. Pondering deeply over this can increase one's patience when dealing with difficulties. 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.”*

## **Building Patience**

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 102:

*"...He [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] said, "O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think." He [Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him] said, "O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, of the steadfast."*

Parents often take away things or prevent their children from obtaining certain things such as unhealthy food in order to protect them. This behaviour often causes the child to become sad or angry as they are completely unaware of the wisdom behind the actions of their parent. This parental behaviour is something which is widely accepted in society and is rightfully believed to be a characteristic of a good and responsible parent. Similarly, in life people often lose or are prevented from obtaining certain worldly things by Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim must understand that the same way parents keep harmful things away from their children even though their children do not understand the reason behind their choice similarly Allah, the Exalted, acts in this manner according to His infinite wisdom and knowledge in order to protect His servants even if people do not understand the wisdom behind His choices. Therefore, every time a Muslim finds themselves in this situation they should reflect on this simple example, which no one would reject irrespective of their faith, so that they are inspired to remain patient and show gratitude for the divine protection Allah, the Exalted, has granted them. They should not act like an immature child by becoming angry and impatient as adults are meant to behave better than children. In fact, children are excused from behaving in such a manner as they lack knowledge and experience

whereas adults should not lack this and will therefore be held accountable for their behaviour in both worlds.

## **Good Comes from Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 102:

*"...He [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] said, "O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think." He [Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him] said, "O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, of the steadfast."*

The Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him, acknowledged that he could only be patient through the mercy and will of Allah, the Exalted. In reality, one cannot avoid sins or perform righteous deeds without the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim must understand that their righteous deeds are a blessing from Allah, the Exalted, as the inspiration, knowledge, strength and opportunity to perform them comes from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Understanding this fact prevents the deadly characteristic of pride. An atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

## Steadfast in Submission

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 103:

*“And when they [Prophets Ibrahim and Ismaeel, peace be upon them] had both submitted [to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted]...”*

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.”*

## **The Outstanding**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 48:

*“And remember Ishmael...all are among the outstanding.”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4119, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the best people are those who remind others of Allah, the Exalted, when they are observed.

This does not refer to those who adopt an Islamic outward appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf, as many of these people do not remind others of Allah, the Exalted, at all. This Hadith refers to those who learn and act on Islamic knowledge so that they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the purification of one's heart which leads to the purification of their outward limbs. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984. This will cause others to remember Allah, the Exalted, when they observe these righteous Muslims. And this remembrance will only increase when these righteous Muslims speak as they only speak in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they avoid evil and vain speech and only speak on beneficial matters in respect to the world and the hereafter. This remembrance further

increases when one observes their actions as they practically implement the teachings of Islam thereby, acting only in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. For example, they love, dislike, give and withhold only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

## **Holy Prophet Ishaq, peace be upon him**

### **Better than Worship**

The next discussion is based on chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 53:

*“...we give you good tidings of a learned boy [Prophet Ishaq, peace be upon him].”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 219, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that learning one verse of the Holy Quran is better than offering 100 cycles of voluntary prayer. And learning a topic of Islamic knowledge even if one does not act on it is better than offering 1000 cycles of voluntary prayer.

Learning a verse includes studying and more importantly practically implementing its teachings in one's life. And it is important to note, a Muslim will only gain this reward when they sincerely strive to act on the topic of knowledge they have learned and practically implement it when the opportunity presents itself. Only when one does not gain the opportunity to act on their topic of Islamic knowledge will they gain the reward of offering 1000 cycles of prayer even if they do not actually act on it. This is because Allah, the Exalted, judges and rewards people

based on their intention and will therefore grant reward to those who would sincerely act when given the opportunity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

Finally, as indicated by the main Hadith under discussion gaining and acting on knowledge is far superior to voluntary worship. This is because the majority do not understand the Arabic language and are therefore less likely to change their behavior and obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in a positive way as they do not understand the language they use to worship Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, learning and acting on knowledge is much more likely to inspire one to change for the better. This is the reason why some Muslims spend decades performing voluntary worship yet, do not improve their behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, or people in the slightest. This by far is not the best course of action.

## Leaving Good Behind

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verses 49-50:

*“...We gave him Isaac...and We made for them a mention [i.e., reputation] of high honor.”*

Muslims must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Ishaq, peace be upon him, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they not only send good ahead to the hereafter but also leave good behind.

First of all, it is important to understand worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example is the great empire of Pharaoh. Islam not only teaches Muslims to send blessings ahead of them to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds but it also teaches them to leave a lovely legacy behind from which people can benefit from. In fact, when a Muslim passes away and leaves behind anything which is useful, such as an ongoing charity in the form of a water well they will be rewarded for it. This is confirmed in Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4223. So a Muslim should strive to perform righteous deeds and send forward as much good as possible but they



should also try leaving a good legacy behind which will benefit them after they pass away.

Unfortunately, many Muslims are so concerned about their wealth and properties that they only end up leaving them behind which does not benefit them in the least. Each Muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for creating a legacy for themselves as the moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly. Today is the day a Muslim should truly reflect on the legacy they will leave behind. If this legacy is good and beneficial they should praise Allah, the Exalted, for granting them the strength to do so. But if it is something which will not benefit them then they should prepare something which will so that they not only send forward good to the hereafter but also leave good behind. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. So each Muslim should ask themselves what is their legacy?

## **Achieving Piety**

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 72:

*“And We gave him Isaac and...all [of them] We made righteous [pious].”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful.

Piety can be summed up to mean fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, 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 includes treating others how one desires to be treated by people.

An aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things take a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful. And the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things and only uses lawful things will protect their religion and honor.

If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, it occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech meaning, speech which derives no benefit nor is it a sin, often leads to evil speech such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoided the first step by not indulging in vain speech they would avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to adopt piety as described earlier, a branch of which is to avoid vain and doubtful things out of fear they will lead to the unlawful.

## **Justice Eliminates Corruption**

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 73:

*“And We made them [including the Prophet Ishaq, peace be upon him] leaders guiding by Our command...”*

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

## Good Doers

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 73:

*“...And We inspired to them [including the Prophet Ishaq, peace be upon him] the doing of good deeds...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many Muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly they must also treat others with good character otherwise they will not succeed as the only truly successful people are the believers.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be rewarded like the Muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

## Prayers Lead to Paradise

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 73:

*“...And We inspired to them [including the Prophet Ishaq, peace be upon him] the...establishment of prayer...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 574, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever establishes the two cool obligatory prayers will enter Paradise.

The two cool obligatory prayers refer to the dawn and late afternoon obligatory prayers as during these two times the weather is cooler than at other times meaning, before sunrise and before sunset.

Establishing the obligatory prayers includes fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes correctly according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as offering them on time. In fact, offering them as soon as they occur is one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252.

Even though, there are five obligatory prayers which must be established yet, only two have been mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion. This is because these two prayers are arguably the two hardest to establish. The obligatory dawn prayer occurs at a time when most people are asleep. Therefore, it requires much energy and motivation in order to leave one's comfortable bed in order to offer it correctly. The obligatory late afternoon prayer mostly occurs at a time where most people have completed their working day and have returned home tired. So to leave one's relaxation after a tiring and even stressful day of work in order to correctly offer their obligatory prayer is difficult. Therefore, if one correctly establishes these two prayers they will through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, find it easier to establish the other obligatory prayers, which usually occur at more convenient times.

Muslims should therefore strive to establish all their obligatory prayers as it is the very essence of Islam and it in fact separates belief from disbelief. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618.



## True Worship

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 73:

*“...and they [including the Prophet Ishaq, peace be upon him] were worshippers of Us.”*

True worship 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.

## **Blessings in Life**

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 113:

*“And We blessed...Isaac...”*

The Holy Prophet Ishaq, peace be upon him, was blessed as he prioritized his activities in the correct way.

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.

## Obtaining Certainty of Faith

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 45:

*“And remember Our servants...Isaac...those of strength [of faith]...”*

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...”*

## Religious Vision

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 45:

*“And remember Our servants...Isaac...those of...[religious] vision.”*

It is important for Muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one



keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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...”*

## How to Live

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 46:

*“Indeed, We chose them [including Prophet Ishaq, peace be upon him] for an exclusive quality: remembrance of the home [of the Hereafter].”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2377, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that he was not concerned over the excess of this material world and his example in this world is of a rider who takes a short rest under the shade of a tree and then leaves it behind by moving on.

In reality, each person is a traveller who stays in this world for a very limited time compared to where they came from meaning, the world of the souls and to where they are heading which is the eternal hereafter. In fact, this world in comparison is like waiting at a bus stop. In this Hadith this world has been compared to a shadow. This is because a shadow does not last long and fades away quickly without people even taking notice which is exactly how a person's days and nights pass away. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not mention a traveller's inn or a hotel as these are solid structures which indicate permanence. A fading shadow better describes this material world. This is because no matter how old a person is they always admit that their life flashed by and felt like a moment. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

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

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated a rider not someone walking as the one who is walking would rest more under the shade of the tree than a rider. This further indicates the limited time people spend in this world.

Taking a rest in the shade indicates the importance of one correctly using the material world in order to obtain the provisions they need just like the rider takes the provision they need namely, rest. A Muslim should therefore prepare for their immediate departure from this world by preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

This does not mean one should abandon this world as this Hadith clearly indicates one should make use of the material world in order to prepare for the hereafter. The rider takes a rest and Muslims must gather the things which will benefit them in the hereafter instead of dedicating their time to unnecessary things which will leave them empty handed on Judgment Day. Chapter 89 Al Fajar, verses 23-24:

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

## **The Chosen and Best**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 47:

*“And indeed they [including the Prophet Ishaq, peace be upon him] are, to Us, among the chosen and outstanding.”*

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 a Muslim can only draw close to Him through fulfilling their obligatory duties. And they can achieve the love of Allah, the Exalted, through voluntary righteous deeds.

This description splits the servants of Allah, the Exalted, into two categories. The first group draws near to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer, and in respect to people, such as the obligatory charity. This can be summed up by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

The second category of those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, are superior to the first group as they not only fulfil their obligatory duties but strive in voluntary righteous deeds. This clearly shows that this is the only path to the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

Whoever takes a path other than this will not achieve this vital goal. This completely rejects the concept of obtaining sainthood without striving in obedience to Allah, the Exalted. The person who claims this is simply a liar. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body becomes pure. This leads to righteous deeds. So if a person does not perform righteous deeds, such as their obligatory duties, then their body is impure which means their spiritual heart is impure as well. This person can never reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, the greatest voluntary righteous deeds one can perform are those based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anyone who chooses to perform voluntary righteous deeds not based on his traditions has been fooled by the Devil as no path will take one close to Allah, the Exalted, except the path and actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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....”*

The pious Muslims who belong in the second higher group are also those who avoid unnecessary things of this material world. This attitude aids them in focusing their efforts on performing voluntary righteous deeds. It is this group who have perfected their faith by loving, hating, giving and withholding all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds Allah, the Exalted, 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.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this Muslim's supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.



## **Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him**

### **Blessings Behind and Ahead**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 133:

*"...when death approached Jacob, when he said to his sons, "What will you worship after me?"..."*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised some righteous deeds which continue benefiting a Muslim after their death namely, ongoing charity, useful knowledge and a righteous child who supplicates for their deceased parent.

It is important to understand worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example of this is the great empire of Pharaoh. Islam not only teaches Muslims to send blessings ahead of them to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds but it also teaches Muslims to leave a lovely legacy behind from which people can benefit.

Unfortunately, many Muslims are so concerned about their wealth and properties that they only end up leaving them behind which does not benefit them in the least. Each Muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for creating a legacy for themselves as the moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly. Today is the day a Muslim should truly reflect on the legacy they will leave behind and if it is righteous they should praise Allah, the Exalted, for granting them the strength to do so. But if it is something which will not benefit them then they should prepare something which will benefit them after their death so that they not only send forward good to the hereafter but also leave good behind. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted.

## Sincerity to Others

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 5:

*“He [Prophet Yaqaob, peace be upon him] said, “O my son, do not relate your vision to your brothers or they will contrive against you a plan...””*

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 general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one’s words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themselves.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themselves in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

*“...Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them...”*

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

*“...And do good as Allah has done good to you...”*

## Gentleness

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verses 17-18:

*"They said, "O our father, indeed we went racing each other and left Joseph with our possessions, and a wolf ate him...And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him] said, "Rather, your souls have enticed you to something..."*

Even though the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, made it obvious to his sons that he knew they had done something evil yet he still criticized them in a gentle way.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters.

This is an important characteristic which must be adopted by all Muslims. It should be used in all aspects of one's life. It is important to understand that being gentle benefits the Muslim themselves more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and minimize the amount of sins they commit, as a gentle person is less likely to commit sins through their speech and actions, but it benefits them in worldly affairs also. For example, the person who

treats their spouse gently will gain more love and respect in return than if they treated their spouse in a harsh manner. Children are more likely to obey and treat their parents with respect when they are treated gently. Colleagues at work are more likely to help the one who is gentle with them. The examples are endless. Only in very rare cases is a harsh attitude required. In most cases, gentle behaviour will be much more effective than a harsh attitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possesses countless good qualities yet, Allah, the exalted, specifically highlighted his gentleness in the Holy Quran as it is a key ingredient required to affect others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Al Imran, verse 159:

*“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”*

A Muslim must remember that they will never be better than a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, nor will the person they interact with be worse than Pharaoh yet, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Musa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them, to deal with Pharaoh in a kind manner. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 44:

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

Therefore, a Muslim should adopt gentleness in all affairs as it leads to much reward and affects others, such as one's family, in a positive way.

## Beautiful Patience

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 18:

*“...[Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, said]...so beautiful patience is most fitting [for me]...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1302, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that real patience is shown at the onset of a difficulty.

It is important to understand that true patience is shown throughout a calamity meaning, from the very onset of the difficulty onwards. Accepting the reality of a difficulty, such as the death of a loved one, eventually, with the passing of time occurs with everyone. This is acceptance not true patience.

Muslims should therefore ensure they encounter difficulties while patient believing that everything which Allah, the Exalted, chooses is for the best even if they fail to observe the wisdoms behind the choices. Instead, they should reflect on the many times when they believed something was good yet, it ended up being bad and vice versa. Understanding the extreme short sightedness and limited knowledge of humans and the infinite knowledge and wisdom of Allah, the Exalted,



can aid a Muslim to show patience from the onset of a difficulty. 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.”*

In addition, it is important for Muslims to continue showing patience till the end of their life. This is because a person can easily lose the reward of patience even if they were patient from the onset by demonstrating impatience further down the line. This is an extremely deadly trap of the Devil. He patiently waits for decades just to ruin the reward of a Muslim. The Holy Quran makes it clear that a Muslim will gain reward for what they bring to Judgment Day, meaning, take with them when they die it does not declare they will gain reward after simply doing a deed, such as showing patience at the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 160:

*“Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgment] with a good deed...”*

## **Aid and Support**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 18:

*“...[Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, said] And Allah is the one sought for help against that which you describe.”*

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.

## **The Decision of Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 67:

*“...[Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, said] and I cannot avail you against [the decree of] Allah at all. The decision is only for Allah...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, there are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But there are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

*“Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”*

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a Muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so Muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

## **Relying on Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 67:

*“...[Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, said] upon Him I have relied, and upon Him let those who would rely [indeed] rely.”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2344, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if people truly trusted Allah, the Exalted, He would provide for them just like He provides for birds. They leave their nests hungry in the morning and return in the evening satisfied.

Truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is something which is felt in the heart but is proven through the limbs meaning, when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

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



The aspect of trust which is internal involves firmly believing that only Allah, the Exalted, can provide one with beneficial things and protect them from harmful things both in worldly and religious matters. A Muslim understands that no one except Allah, the Exalted, can give, withhold, harm or benefit someone.

It is important to note, that truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, does not mean one should abandon using the means which Allah, the Exalted, has provided, such as medicine. As the main Hadith under discussion clearly mentions that the birds leave their nests actively searching for provision. When one uses the strength and means provided by Allah, the Exalted, according to the teachings of Islam they are undoubtedly obeying Him. This is in fact, the outward element of trusting in Allah, the Exalted. This has been made clear in many verses and Hadiths. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 71:

*“O you who have believed, take your precaution...”*

In reality, the outward activity is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and trusting Allah, the Exalted, inwardly is the inward state of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One should not abandon the outward tradition even if they possess the inward state of trust.

Actions and using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting Him. In this respect, actions can be split into three categories. The first are those actions of obedience which Allah, the Exalted, commands Muslims to do so that they can avoid Hell and obtain Paradise. Abandoning these while claiming trust that Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them is simply wishful thinking and is therefore blameworthy.

The second type of actions are those means which Allah, the Exalted, has created in this world in order for people to live in it safely, such as eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty and wearing warm clothes in cold weather. A person who abandons these and causes harm to himself is blameworthy. However, there are some people who have been provided special strength by Allah, the Exalted, so that they can avoid these means without harming themselves. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used to fast for days on end uninterrupted but forbade others from doing the same as Allah, the Exalted, provided for him directly without the need for food. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1922. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed for the fourth rightly guided Caliph Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, so that he would not feel excess cold or heat. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 117. Therefore, if a person turns away from these means but is provided with the strength to endure without failing in their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people then it is acceptable otherwise it is blameworthy.

The third type of actions in respect to trusting in Allah, the Exalted, are those things which have been set as a customary practice which Allah, the

Exalted, sometimes breaks for certain people. An example of this are the people who become cured of illnesses without the need of medicine. This is quite common especially in poorer countries where medicine is difficult to obtain. This is linked to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2144, which advises that no person will die until they utilize every ounce of their provision which was allocated to them, which according to another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, was over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. So the one who truly realises this Hadith might not seek provision actively knowing that what was allocated to them so long ago cannot miss them. So for this person the customary means of obtaining provision such as obtaining it through a job is broken by Allah, the Exalted. This is a high and rare rank. Only the one who can behave in such a manner without complaining or panicking nor expecting things from people is free of blame if they choose this path. It is important to note, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692, that it is a sin for a person to fail in providing for their dependents even though they may be on this high rank.

Having real trust in Allah, the Exalted, leads to being content with destiny. Meaning, whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them they accept without complaint and without desiring things to change as they firmly trust that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the 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.”*

To conclude, it is best to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by using the lawful means one has been granted firmly believing they are from Allah, the Exalted, and trust internally that only what Allah, the Exalted, decides will occur, which is undoubtedly the best choice for each person whether they observe this or not.

## Importance of Knowledge

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 67:

*“...And indeed, he [Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him] was a possessor of knowledge because of what We had taught him, but most of the people do not know.”*

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.

## **Divine Hope**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 83:

*“...[Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, said] Perhaps Allah will bring them [his children] to me all together...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to

obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.



## When Others Depart

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 84:

*"[Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him]...said, "Oh, my sorrow over Joseph," and his eyes became white from grief, for he was [of that] a suppressor."*

Every day people lose their loved ones. It is an inevitable outcome. A Muslim can remember and act on many things which can aid them during this difficulty. One thing is to observe the situation in a positive way. Meaning, instead of being sad over what one has lost they should concentrate on the good things that they gained through the person who has departed, such as their good advice and guidance. When one reflects on this they will understand that it was better to know the person before losing them instead of not knowing them at all. It is similar to the statement, it is better to have loved and lost than not loved at all. Though in most cases, this statement is taken out of context and misused but when used in this way it is correct and helpful.

In addition, a Muslim who undoubtedly believes in the hereafter should always remember that people do not meet in this world only to leave each other. But instead they only leave this world in order to meet again in the next world. This attitude can aid one in remaining patient during such a

difficulty. And it should inspire them to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience so that they can reunite with their loved one in their final resting place in the gardens of refuge, forever.

## Learn About Patience

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 86:

*“He [Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him] said, “I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you do not know.””*

If a Muslim desires to adopt patience they should learn about it from the teachings of Islam. For example, a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, advises that being patient over the things one dislikes leads to a great reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

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

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

A patient Muslim understands that anything which effected them, such as a difficulty, could not have been avoided even if the entire creation aided them. Similarly, whatever missed them could not have affected them. The one who truly accepts this fact will not exult and grow proud over anything they obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, allocated that thing to them. Nor will they grieve over anything which they fail to obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, did not allocate that thing to them and nothing in existence can alter this fact. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

*“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register<sup>1</sup> before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allah, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you...”*

In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 79, that when something occurs a Muslim should firmly believe it was decreed and nothing could have changed the outcome. And a Muslim should not have regrets believing they could have prevented the outcome if they somehow behaved differently as this attitude only causes the Devil to encourage them towards impatience and complaining about destiny. A patient Muslim

truly understands that whatever Allah, the Exalted, has chosen is best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind it. The one who is patient does desire a change in their situation and even supplicates for it but they do not complain about what has occurred. Being persistently patient can lead a Muslim to a greater level namely, contentment.

The one who is content does not desire things to change as they know the choice of Allah, the Exalted, is better than their choice. This Muslim firmly believes and acts on the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. It advises that every situation is best for the believer. If they encounter a problem they should show patience which leads to blessings. And if they experience times of ease they should show gratitude which also leads to blessings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Muslim should behave with the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as if they would behave with a skilled trustworthy doctor. The same way a Muslim would not complain taking bitter medicine prescribed by the doctor knowing

it is best for them they should accept the difficulties they face in the world knowing it is best for them. In fact, a sensible person would thank the doctor for the bitter medicine and similarly an intelligent Muslim would thank Allah, the Exalted, for any situation they encounter.

In addition, a Muslim should review the many verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the reward given to the patient and content Muslim. Deep reflection on this will inspire a Muslim to remain steadfast when facing difficulties. For example, Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

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

In order to gain patience and even contentment with what Allah, the Exalted, chooses for a person they should seek and act on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they reach the high level of excellence of faith. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in

Sahih Muslim, number 99. Excellence in faith is when a Muslim performs deeds, such as the prayer, as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will not feel the pain of difficulties and trials as they will completely be immersed in the awareness and love of Allah, the Exalted. This is similar to the state of the women who did not feel pain when cutting their own hands when they observed the beauty of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 31:

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

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



## Avoid Ignorance

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 86:

*“He [Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him] said...I know from Allah that which you do not know.”*

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”*

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

## Correctly Hope in Allah, the Exalted

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“[Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, said]...despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

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 this verse 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.

## **Avoid Being Self-Absorbed**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verses 97-98:

*"They said, "O our father, ask for us forgiveness of our sins; indeed, we have been sinners." He [Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him] said, "I will ask forgiveness for you from my Lord..."*

This incident reminds Muslims not to become self-absorbed thereby failing to be sincere to others. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the Muslim nation is like one body. If any part of the body suffers pain the rest of the body shares in its pain.

This Hadith, like many others, indicates the importance of not becoming so self-absorbed into one's own life thereby behaving as if the universe revolves around them and their problems. The Devil inspires a Muslim to focus so much on their own life and their problems that they lose focus on the bigger picture which leads to impatience and causes them to become heedless of others thereby failing their duty in supporting others according to their means. A Muslim should always bear this in mind and strive to aid others as much as they can. This extends to beyond financial help and includes all verbal and physical help such as good and sincere advice.

Muslims should regularly observe the news and those who are in difficult situations all over the world. This will inspire them to avoid becoming self-centered and instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about themselves is lower in rank than an animal as even they care about their offspring. In fact, a Muslim should be better than animals by practically caring for others beyond their own family.

Even though a Muslim cannot remove all the problems of the world but they can play their part and help others according to their means as this is what Allah, the Exalted, commands and expects.

## **Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him**

### **Becoming a Beloved**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 6:

*“And thus will your Lord choose you [Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him]...”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4102, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised how to obtain the love of Allah, the Exalted.

The love of Allah, the Exalted, is obtained when one avoids the excess of this material world which are beyond their needs. Meaning, a Muslim should strive in this world in order to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. And they should strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anything from the material world which aids one in these things is not in reality a worldly thing. Therefore, avoiding them

is not required. But one must avoid those things which either hinder or prevent them from fulfilling these duties. This is how a Muslim can keep the world in their hand and not in their heart. This is how a Muslim obtains the love of Allah, the Exalted, as this attitude causes them to strive in His obedience which attracts the love of Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.



## Sensible Questions

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 7:

*“Certainly were there in Joseph and his brothers signs for those who ask.”*

One of the ways of adopting certainty of faith whereby one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, is asking sensible questions and then striving to act on their answers.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3257, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against asking too many questions as this led to the destruction of the past nations. Muslims should instead do what they have been commanded according to their capacity and refrain from what they have been prohibited from.

Muslims should not adopt this mentality as people who have a habit of asking too many questions often fail in fulfilling their duties and acquiring beneficial knowledge as they are too busy asking and researching about less important and sometimes irrelevant information. This mentality can inspire a person to argue and debate over these types of issues also.

Unfortunately, this attitude is quite widespread amongst Muslims today as they often argue about non obligatory and less important issues instead of concentrating on fulfilling their obligatory duties and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, correctly meaning, fulfilling them with their full etiquettes and conditions.

A Muslim should instead research and query about topics which are relevant and important to understand for both worldly and religious matters otherwise they will follow in the footsteps of the people mentioned in this Hadith and only make their own lives more difficult.

## Evil Schemes

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 10:

*"Said a speaker among them, "Do not kill Joseph but throw him into the bottom of the well; some travelers will pick him up - if you would do [something]."*

The first lesson to learn is that one should never let their envy or dislike for someone drive them to plot against or harm them in anyway. The envy the brothers of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, had for him encouraged them to harm him.

This mentality only drives one to many other sins some of which have been mentioned in this great event. For example, it inspired them to physically harm the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, lie to their father and fracture their ties of kinship with their brother. A Muslim who feels dislike for others should always withhold from manifesting it outwardly and resist this negative feeling inwardly. It is hoped whoever behaves in such a manner will not be penalised for disliking someone else as they did not act on their feelings.

Another important thing to learn is that one should never plot to do an evil thing as it will always, one way or another, backfire on them. Even if

these consequences are delayed to the next world they will face them eventually. For example, the brothers of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, desired to harm him as they desired the love, respect and affection of their father the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him. But it is clear that their scheming only put them further away from their desire. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 18:

*“And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, “Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting...”*

The more one plots evil the more Allah, the Exalted, will put them further from their goal. Even if they outwardly achieve their desire Allah, the Exalted, will cause the very thing they desired to become a curse for them in both worlds unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then do they await except the way [i.e., fate] of the former peoples?...”*

## Ease and Difficulties

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 15:

*“So when they took him [Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] and agreed to put him into the bottom of the well. But We inspired to him, "You will surely inform them [someday] about this affair of theirs while they do not perceive.””*

In a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the importance of understanding that every difficulty a person faces will be followed by ease. This reality has also been mentioned in the Holy Quran for example, chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 7:

*“...Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease [i.e., relief].”*

It is important for Muslims to understand this reality as it gives rise to patience and even contentment. Being uncertain over the changes in circumstances can lead one to impatience, ingratitude and even towards unlawful things, such as unlawful provision. But the one who firmly believes all difficulties will eventually be replaced with ease will patiently wait for this change fully trusting in the teachings of Islam. This patience

is much loved by Allah, the Exalted, and greatly rewarded. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 146:

*“...And Allah loves the steadfast.”*

This is the reason Allah, the Exalted, has mentioned numerous examples within the Holy Quran when difficult situations were followed by ease and blessings. For example, the following verse of the Holy Quran mentions the great difficulty the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, faced from his people and how Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the great flood. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 76:

*“And [mention] Noah, when he called [to Allah] before [that time], so We responded to him and saved him and his family from the great affliction [i.e., the flood].”*

Another example is found in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 69:

*“We [i.e., Allah] said, “O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.”*

The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, faced a great difficulty in the form of a great fire but Allah, the Exalted, made it cool and peaceful for him.

These examples and many more have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that Muslims understand that a moment of difficulty will eventually be followed by ease for those who obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Therefore, it is important for Muslims to study these Islamic teachings in order to observe the countless cases where Allah, the Exalted, granted ease to His obedient servants after they faced difficulties. If Allah, the Exalted, has saved His obedient servants from great difficulties mentioned in the divine teachings then He can and will save the obedient Muslims facing smaller difficulties also.

## A Small Price

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 20:

*“And they sold him [Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] for a reduced price - a few dirhams - and they were, concerning him, of those content with little.”*

After the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, was betrayed by his brothers he was sold as a slave. The Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, was priceless yet the people around him greatly underestimated his value. Muslims should not behave in the same manner in respect to the hereafter and sacrifice it for the sake of the small material world.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the



unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a Muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent Muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

## **Knowledge is Superior**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 22:

*“And when he [Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] reached maturity, We gave him wisdom and knowledge. And thus We reward the doers of good.”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 219, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that learning one verse of the Holy Quran is better than offering 100 cycles of voluntary prayer. And learning a topic of Islamic knowledge even if one does not act on it is better than offering 1000 cycles of voluntary prayer.

Learning a verse includes studying and more importantly practically implementing its teachings in one's life. And it is important to note, a Muslim will only gain this reward when they sincerely strive to act on the topic of knowledge they have learned and practically implement it when the opportunity presents itself. Only when one does not gain the opportunity to act on their topic of Islamic knowledge will they gain the reward of offering 1000 cycles of prayer even if they do not actually act on it. This is because Allah, the Exalted, judges and rewards people based on their intention and will therefore grant reward to those who would sincerely act when given the opportunity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

Finally, as indicated by the main Hadith under discussion gaining and acting on knowledge is far superior to voluntary worship. This is because the majority do not understand the Arabic language and are therefore less likely to change their behavior and obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in a positive way as they do not understand the language they use to worship Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, learning and acting on knowledge is much more likely to inspire one to change for the better. This is the reason why some Muslims spend decades performing voluntary worship yet, do not improve their behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, or people in the slightest. This by far is not the best course of action. Finally, sincerely acting on the knowledge one possesses in order to please Allah, the Exalted, benefit themselves and others is the wisdom indicated in this verse.

## Avoid Darkness

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 23:

*“And she, in whose house he [Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] was, sought to seduce him. She closed the doors and said, “Come, you.” He said, “[I seek] the refuge of Allah. Indeed, he [her husband – the governor] is my master, who has made good my residence. Indeed, wrongdoers will not succeed.””*

The Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, made it clear that he did not desire to wrong Allah, the Exalted, by disobeying Him, he did not desire to wrong himself through sin or the woman’s husband.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2447, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that oppression will become a darkness on the Day of Judgment.

This is vital to avoid as those who find themselves plunged in darkness are unlikely to find their way to Paradise. Only those who will be provided a guiding light will be able to do this successfully.

Oppression can take many forms. The first type is when one fails to fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. Even though this has no effect on the infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, it will cause the person to become submerged into darkness in both worlds. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, whenever a person commits a sin a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. The more they sin the more their heart will become encompassed by darkness. This will prevent them from accepting and following true guidance in this world which will ultimately lead to darkness in the next world. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

*“No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning.”*

The next type of oppression is when one oppresses themselves by not fulfilling the trust they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, in the form of their body and other worldly blessings they possess. The greatest of which is one's faith. This must be protected and strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

The final type of oppression is when one mistreats others. Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive these sins until the oppressor's victim forgives them first. As people are not so merciful this is unlikely to happen. Then justice will be established on Judgment Day where the oppressor's righteous deeds will be given to their victim and if necessary the victim's sins will be given to the oppressor. This may lead to the oppressor being hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. One should therefore treat others how they wish

to be treated by people. A Muslim should avoid all forms of oppression if they desire a guiding light in this world and in the next.

## **Shade of Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 23:

*“And she, in whose house he [Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] was, sought to seduce him. She closed the doors and said, “Come, you.” He said, “[I seek] the refuge of Allah. Indeed, he [her husband – the governor] is my master, who has made good my residence. Indeed, wrongdoers will not succeed.””*

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6806, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned seven groups of people who will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

This shade will protect them from the horrors of the Day of Judgment which includes the unbearable heat caused by the Sun being brought within two miles of the creation. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421.

One of the people mentioned who will be granted shade on Judgment Day is the one who is invited towards fornication but rejects it out of the fear of Allah, the Exalted. Controlling one's desire especially when no one except Allah, the Exalted, will know about it is a great deed. Muslims

should strive to avoid situations where they might be invited to sins by firstly avoiding places where sins are more common, such as a nightclub. This is extremely important as a person's environment often has a deep impact on their attitude and behaviour. Just like a student is more likely to study in a quiet library compared to a busy and loud house a Muslim is less likely to be attracted to sins when they avoid places where sins occur regularly and openly. The other important thing is to avoid people who openly commit sins and invite others to them. A person will adopt the characteristics of their companions whether good or bad. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. Muslims should not only ensure they accompany good people but also encourage their dependents, such as their children, to do the same. If Muslims truly concentrated on this it will dramatically reduce the amount of youth who become involved in gangs and crime. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

*“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”*



## Steadfast Against Sins

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 24:

*“And she certainly determined [to seduce] him [Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him], and he would have inclined to her had he not seen the proof [i.e., sign] of his Lord. And thus [it was] that We should avert from him evil and immorality. Indeed, he was of Our sincere servants.”*

This verse reminds Muslims that whenever they are tempted by the Devil or people to commit sins they should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, by immediately remembering Allah, the Exalted. Remembering the all-encompassing gaze of Allah, the Exalted, can encourage one to turn away from committing a sin by reminding them that even if no one else observes them Allah, the Exalted, surely does. In addition, Allah, the Exalted, not only observes them but will hold them accountable on a day which is unavoidable. This attitude has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 201:

*“Indeed, those who fear Allah - when an impulse touches them from Satan, they remember [Him] and at once they have insight.”*

This great event also advises Muslims that they should avoid places and people which invite them towards sins. They should behave as the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, did when he fled from the woman who invited him towards sin and from the place where the sin was meant to take place. The environment and companions one has will always have a huge impact on one's behavior. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, that a person is on their friend's religion. Meaning, they will adopt the characteristics of their companions. Muslims should therefore strive to avoid places and people who invite them towards sins and instead seek the companionship of those who invite them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and working hard towards succeeding in this world in a lawful way.

This great event also teaches Muslims that if they sincerely strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, Allah, the Exalted, will protect them from both religious and worldly harm. People are not perfect they will make mistakes. Therefore, this protection includes the guidance of Allah, the Exalted, towards sincere repentance. Returning to Allah, the Exalted, in this way is a characteristic of one of the best types of people according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4251.

## Protection from Evil

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 24:

*“...And thus [it was] that We should avert from him [Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] evil and immorality. Indeed, he was of Our sincere servants.”*

This incident clearly connects divine protection from evil with being sincere to Allah, the Exalted.

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.

## **Slander and Backbiting**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 25:

*“And they both raced to the door, and she tore his [Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] shirt from the back, and they found her husband at the door. She said, “What is the recompense of one who intended evil for your wife but that he be imprisoned or a painful punishment?””*

In order to avoid punishment she slandered the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6593, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of backbiting and slander.

Backbiting is when one criticizes someone behind their back in a way which would be displeasing to them even though it is the truth. Whereas, slander is similar to backbiting except that the statement is not true. These sins mainly involve speech but can include other things, such as using hand signals. These are major sins and backbiting has been compared to eating the flesh of a dead corpse in the Holy Quran. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

*“...And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it...”*

It is important to understand that these sins are worse than most of the sins which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted. This is because the sins between a person and Allah, the Exalted, will be forgiven by Him if the sinner sincerely repents. But Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive a backbiter or a slanderer until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then on Judgment day the good deeds of the backbiter/slanderer will be given to their victim as compensation and if needed the sins of the victim will be given to their backbiter/slanderer until justice is established. This may well cause the backbiter/slanderer to be hurled into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

The only times backbiting is lawful is if one is warning and protecting another person of harm or if a person is resolving a complaint against another with a third party, such as a legal case.

One should avoid backbiting and slandering by firstly gaining knowledge on the evil consequences of these major sins. Secondly, a person should only utter words which they would happily say in front of the person full well knowing they would not take it in an offensive way. Thirdly, a Muslim should only utter words about another if they would not mind someone else saying those or similar words about them. Meaning, they should talk about others how they want people to talk about them.

Finally, a Muslim should concentrate on fixing their own faults and when done sincerely it will prevent them from backbiting and slandering others.

## **Loyalty to Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verses 26-28:

*“...And a witness from her family testified, "If his [Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] shirt is torn from the front, then she has told the truth, and he is of the liars. But if his shirt is torn from the back, then she has lied, and he is of the truthful." So when he [i.e., her husband] saw his shirt torn from the back...”*

It is important to note that the witness belonged to the woman's family yet they did not alter their testimony in order to benefit her, which unfortunately many Muslims would do.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

## Great Plans

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 28:

*“...he said, "Indeed, it is of your [i.e., his wife who falsely accused the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] plan. Indeed, your plan is great [i.e., vehement].””*

It is important for Muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a Muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A Muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice Muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

## Concealing Faults

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 29:

*“[the husband of the woman who falsely accused Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, said] Joseph, ignore this...”*

The governor of Egypt wanted the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, to overlook and conceal his wife’s evil plan.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever conceals the faults of a Muslim will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted, in both this world and the next. This is quite evident if one ponders over it. The people who are accustomed to exposing the faults of others are the ones whose faults are made public by Allah, the Exalted. But the one who conceals the faults of others is considered by society as someone who has no obvious faults.

There are two types of people in respect to this advice. The first are those whose wrong actions are private meaning, this person does not commit sins openly nor exposes their sins in a boastful manner to others. If this person slips up and commits a sin which becomes known

to others it should be veiled as long as this does not cause harm to others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 19:

*“Indeed, those who like that immorality should be spread [or publicized] among those who have believed will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter...”*

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to overlook the mistakes of those who strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4375.

The second type of person is the wicked one who commits sins openly and does not care about people finding out about them. In fact, they often boast about the sins they have committed to others. As they inspire others to act in an evil way exposing their faults in order to warn others does not contradict this Hadith. Nor will this person have their faults exposed by Allah, the Exalted, in return for exposing the faults of this wicked person, which is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546, as long as they are exposing the faults of another for the correct reason.

## True Beauty

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 31:

*“...And when they saw him [Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him]...and said, "Perfect is Allah! This is not a man; this is none but a noble angel.””*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1999, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves beauty.

Islam does not prohibit a Muslim from dedicating energy, time and money in beautifying themselves as this can be considered fulfilling the rights of their body. This has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5199. But the key thing which differentiates acting in this manner to acting in a disliked or even sinful manner is when one is excessive, wasteful or extravagant when beautifying themselves. A good way to determine this is that beautifying oneself should never cause one to neglect fulfilling one's duty to Allah, the Exalted, or people which is not possible to fulfill without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. And in reality correcting one's physical appearance so that they appear clean and smart is not expensive nor does it take much time or effort.

In addition, it is more important to understand that true beauty which Allah, the Exalted, loves is connected to internal beauty meaning, one's character. This beauty will endure in both worlds whereas one's outer beauty will eventually fade away with the passing of time. One should therefore prioritize obtaining this true beauty over external beauty by striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they eliminate any bad traits, such as envy, from their character and adopt good characteristics, such as generosity. This will aid one in fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and will aid them in fulfilling the rights of people, such as their dependents.



## **Remain on Good**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verses 32-33:

*"She said, "That is the one about whom you blamed me. And I certainly sought to seduce him, but he firmly refused; and if he will not do what I order him, he will surely be imprisoned and will be of those debased." He [Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] said, "My Lord, prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me. And if You do not avert from me their plan, I might incline toward them and [thus] be of the ignorant.""*

The Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, chose to go to prison instead of committing a sin. Muslims are not expected to make huge sacrifices like those made by the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, but they should not compromise on their faith for the sake of people or to gain worldly things. It is important to understand that no matter what worldly success a person gains through compromising on their faith eventually this success will become a curse and great burden for them in both worlds. It is quite evident when one observes the media that those who compromised on their moral values and faith ended up sad and depressed irrespective of how much worldly success they obtained. So a Muslim should instead remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam and firmly believe, sooner or later, they will be blessed with worldly success beyond their expectations let alone the blessings which await them in the next world. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 30:

*“Indeed, those who have said, "Our Lord is Allah" and then remained on a right course - the angels will descend upon them, [saying], "Do not fear and do not grieve but receive good tidings of Paradise, which you were promised.”*

In addition, this great event reminds Muslims to avoid pride by believing that the ability to remain steadfast is achieved through their own strength. This is not possible without the guidance and mercy of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, performing a righteous deed or refraining from sins is not possible without the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of inspiration, strength, knowledge and opportunity. This should inspire one to remain grateful to Allah, the Exalted, whenever they achieve worldly or religious success.

Finally, this great event also indicates the importance of not helping others in bad things irrespective of who they are. Muslims should instead help others in good and beneficial things and not care who is in charge of them or who else is taking part in them. Good should be supported even if a stranger is doing it and evil things should be avoided and advised against even if a beloved is doing them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

## Obtaining a Response

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 34:

*“So his Lord responded to him [Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] and averted from him their plan...”*

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who answers all supplications by either fulfilling one's requests, removing an equivalent sin from their book of deeds or by saving reward for them in the hereafter as long as the etiquettes and conditions of a supplication are fulfilled. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604. Allah, the Exalted, is in fact far too generous and shy to turn away a beggar from His door empty handed. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3556.

The Muslim who understands this divine name will persist on supplicating to Allah, the Exalted, and never give up hope of an answer. They will strive to fulfil all the conditions and etiquettes of a supplication in order to guarantee its acceptance.

A Muslim must act on this divine name by fulfilling the good requests of people. In fact, a Hadith found in Shama'il At Tirmidhi, number 335,

advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never turned someone down when asked for something good.

## **Types of Polytheism**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 38:

*“...And it was not for us [including Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] to associate anything with Allah...”*

The greatest major sin is to associate others with Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6273. Polytheism can be classified as greater and minor. The greater type is when one worships more than one God. If a person dies in this state they will not be forgiven. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 48:

*“Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him...”*

The minor type is when one shows off their actions. This has been confirmed in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. On Judgment Day those who performed deeds to please others besides Allah, the Exalted, will be commanded to gain their reward from them which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

## Receiving More

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 38:

*“...That is from the favor of Allah upon us and upon the people, but most of the people are not grateful.”*

A Muslim must ensure they fulfill all three aspects of gratitude so that they avoid becoming a denier of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who is ungrateful in reality, scorns the One who granted them the blessings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

*“...And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.”*

The three aspects of gratitude are to internally acknowledge Allah, the Exalted, as the sole Creator and Provider of all blessings. An aspect of this is to correct one's intention so that they only perform actions to please Allah, the Exalted. The next aspect is to praise Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue. And the final and highest aspect is to practically show gratitude through one's actions by using each blessing as prescribed by Islam in order to please 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]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'”*

As true gratitude leads to an increase in blessings Muslims should fear that showing ingratitude may cause the blessings they possess to either be taken away from them or for their blessings to be used against them by becoming a burden and a curse for them in both worlds. It is important to note, even if a Muslim becomes truly grateful they will still face tests and difficulties as they are guaranteed. But if they behave in the correct way they will be guided through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and body in this world and a great reward in the hereafter.

## True Guidance

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 40:

*“[Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, said]...Legislation is not but for Allah...That is the correct religion...”*

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.

## **Actualize the Truth**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 46:

*"[He said], "Joseph, O man of truth..."*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed the importance of truthfulness and avoiding lies. The first part advises that truthfulness leads to righteousness which in turn leads to Paradise. When a person persists on truthfulness they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a truthful person.

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not

concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

## **The Muslim and Believer**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 52:

*“[Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, said] That is so he [the governor of Egypt] will know that I did not betray him in [his] absence...”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true Muslim and a true believer. A true Muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A Muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a Muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a Muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

## **Persistent on Good**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 53:

*“And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil, except those upon which my Lord has mercy. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

The first thing to note is that a Muslim should not attribute purity and piety to themselves as this can indicate pride. It is closer to servanthood and humility to admit the truth that anything good is only obtained through the mercy and guidance of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 32:

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

In addition, this great event highlights the importance of understanding that the outer and inner Devils will always persist in misguiding a person. Therefore, a Muslim must persist in combating both these enemies through sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It is why a Muslim cannot simply accept Islam with the tongue and not strive actively in obeying Allah, the Exalted. The one who

behaves in such a manner will be easily defeated by these enemies. Persistence in obedience is required in order to overcome these enemies. It is one of the reasons why the five daily obligatory prayers are spread out throughout a day instead of being grouped together in a few hours or on a single day in the week. This attitude contradicts persistence in obedience to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, this also indicates that a Muslim must persist throughout the day just like their enemies persist throughout the day against them. This is achieved by not only fulfilling one's obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, but by acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, throughout the day. It is for this reason Allah, the Exalted, has stressed that every aspect of the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a role model for all Muslims to follow. 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.”*

Only through following his example in everyday life can a Muslim through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, overcome these two enemies. 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. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.””*



## **Authority**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 55:

*"[Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] said, "Appoint me over the storehouses of the land. Indeed, I will be a knowing guardian.""*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for Muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest as well as using each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach Muslims to push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themselves harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.<sup>1</sup> So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”*

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. They should not be neglected nor handed over to others such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

## Work Hard

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 56:

*“And thus We established Joseph in the land...and We do not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.”*

This verse provides hope that as long as one strives to do something lawful and beneficial their efforts will not be wasted. If Allah, the Exalted, does not waste the efforts of people who do not even believe in Him why would He not support the Muslims who believe in His Oneness and Lordship? If Allah, the Exalted, does not waste the efforts of people when they strive for the material world how can He then waste the efforts of those who strive to achieve good in the hereafter?

People should therefore, never give up striving to achieve good in both this world and in the next. Unfortunately, some Muslims have given up struggling to earn a lawful income after facing some hardship. They instead opt to receive social benefits and become a burden on society. Those who are rightly entitled to receive benefits should continue to utilise them as it is their right. But those who have the ability to earn for themselves should do so.

This verse also encourages Muslims to continue doing good to others even if they do not appreciate their efforts. If one acts with sincerity meaning, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they should be confident their efforts have been recorded and will be rewarded in both worlds.

To conclude, whatever lawful action a Muslim performs whether its worldly, such as a business opportunity, or whether they perform a religious deed they should put full effort into it knowing that Allah, the Exalted, will support them and grant them success, sooner or later.

## Let Things Go

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 56:

*“They said, “If he steals - a brother of his has stolen before.” But Joseph kept it within himself and did not reveal it to them...”*

Here the brothers of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, falsely accused him of being a thief but he did not challenge them and instead overlooked and pardoned.

All Muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same Muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many Muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a Muslim who hopes for Allah,

the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

## Forgiving Others

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 92:

*“He [Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] said, “No blame will there be upon you today. May Allah forgive you; and He is the most merciful of the merciful.””*

This verse mentions an incredibly important characteristic to adopt. Namely, to be forbearing when one encounters difficulties especially, difficulties from people. One should never reply evil with evil as this contradicts the behaviour of a successful Muslim. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

*“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

Replying good with good is nothing special as even animals show kindness in return for kindness. What is special is showing good in reply to evil especially, when a person is in a position to take revenge, just like the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, was. In reality, behaving in this positive manner benefits oneself as the one who learns to let things

go and forgive others will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”*

In fact, as proven by this great event according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, the one who forgives others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be raised in honour by Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, this great event indicates that a person should not believe they are superior to the people they have forgiven. As in reality the superior one is the person who is forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this type of pride and fails to repent will enter Hell according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4174.

Finally, this great event indicates that a person should never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As long as a Muslim sincerely repents and strives to be better they should hope for forgiveness. But a Muslim should not continue sinning without trying to change and expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them as this is not hope it is merely wishful thinking.



Sincere repentance includes feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising not to return to the same or similar sin and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

## Positive Perception

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 92:

*“[Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him]...And He was certainly good to me when He took me out of prison and brought you [here] from Bedouin life after Satan had induced [estrangement] between me and my brothers...”*

The Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, confirmed in this verse that all good in this world and the next is granted by Allah, the Exalted. But more importantly even though it is a fact that nothing in creation occurs without the will and choice of Allah, the Exalted, which includes difficulties and hardships, it is a sign of true servanthood not to attribute these things to Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, mentioned the good things Allah, the Exalted, chose for him but did not mention the great difficulties he faced during his life which occurred through the will and choice of Allah, the Exalted, as this behaviour can be seen as a type of complaint. The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, did the same thing when he attributed good things to Allah, the Exalted, yet attributed illness to himself even though illnesses only occur through the choice and will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 80:

*“And when I am ill, it is He who cures me.”*

This attitude is important to adopt as it makes one's mentality positive rather than negative. The one who adopts a negative mentality will only ever observe and mention their problems instead of observing the countless blessings they still possess which leads to impatience and further difficulties. Whereas, the one who possesses a positive mind-set will only ever observe and mention the countless blessings they possess in all situations which leads to patience and true gratitude which is shown by the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, in this verse. It is important to firmly believe that the glass is half full not half empty.

## Under Your Control

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 101:

*“[Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] My Lord, You have given me [something] of sovereignty...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2409, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person is a guardian and responsible for the things under their care.

The greatest thing a Muslim is a guardian of is their faith. Therefore, they must strive to fulfill its responsibility by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This guardianship also includes every blessing one has been granted by Allah, the Exalted, which includes external things such as wealth and internal things such as one's body. A Muslim must fulfill the responsibility of these things by using them in the way prescribed by Islam. For example, a Muslim should only use their eyes to look at lawful things and their tongue to utter only lawful and useful words.

This guardianship also extends to others within one's life such as relatives and friends. A Muslim must fulfill this responsibility by fulfilling their rights such as providing for them and gently commanding good and forbidding evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should not cut off from others especially over worldly issues. Instead, they should continue to treat them kindly hoping they will change for the better. This guardianship includes one's children. A Muslim must guide them by leading by example as this by far is the most effective way in guiding children. They must obey Allah, the Exalted, practically as discussed earlier and teach their children to do the same. A separate free eBook titled: Raising Pious Children, has been produced which discusses this aspect in detail and can be viewed using the following link:

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:1122ebc4-72ab-4384-9198-7a93e45f53b3>

To conclude, according to this Hadith everyone has some sort of responsibility they have been entrusted with. So they should gain and act on the relevant knowledge in order to fulfill them as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

## **Guardian in Both Worlds**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 101:

*“[Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] My Lord...You are my protector in this world and the Hereafter...”*

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]...”*

## **Your State**

The next discussion is based on chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 101:

*“[Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him] My Lord...Cause me to die a Muslim and join me with the righteous.”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7232, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people will be resurrected on Judgment Day in the same state they died on Earth.

This means that if a person dies on good they will be resurrected on good. But if they die on evil they will be raised in an evil way.

A Muslim should not live in heedlessness by believing just because they have faith in Islam it guarantees they will die and therefore be raised in a good state on Judgment Day. If they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then die in this state without sincerely repenting then they will be raised in an evil way. It does not take a scholar to determine what will happen to this person on Judgment Day.



From this Hadith one can understand that the way they will die will be in the same state they have lived. Meaning, if they lived in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will die in a good state and therefore be raised in a good state which includes being raised with the righteous as they practically followed in their footsteps. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

A Muslim should therefore not walk the path to Hell by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and believe that they will somehow be raised with the pious and end up in Paradise.

## **Holy Prophet Ayyub, peace be upon him**

### **If Only**

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 83:

*“And [mention] Job, when he called to his Lord, "Indeed, adversity has touched me, and You are the most merciful of the merciful.””*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4168, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims not to question destiny as this opens the door to the Devil. He encourages Muslims to challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as they do not observe the wisdom behind it because of their short sightedness. This in turn leads to impatience and the loss of reward. One should reflect on their past experiences where they believed something was good when it in fact was bad and vice versa in order to inspire them to remain patient as they will be shown these benefits sooner or later. 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.”*

## Being Saved

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verses 83-84:

*“And [mention] Job, when he called to his Lord, “Indeed, adversity has touched me, and You are the most merciful of the merciful.” So We responded to him and removed what afflicted him of adversity...”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1081, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims how to gain blessings in their provision, divine support and an improvement in their condition and state.

The first thing is to sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted, before one dies. As the time of death is unknown this Hadith actually indicates sincerely repenting whenever one commits a sin meaning, repenting without delay. This consists of seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and whoever else has been wronged, feeling regret, making a firm promise not to commit the same or a similar sin again. And finally, if possible, to make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

The next thing advised in the main Hadith is that a Muslim must make use of their time before they become preoccupied with responsibilities,

an illness or a difficulty. A Muslim can achieve this by obeying Allah, the Exalted, through fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must hasten to perform righteous deeds within their means as much as possible without delay as the tomorrow they hope for may never come. It is hoped that the one who behaves in this manner will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, when they are no longer in a position to perform extra righteous deeds due to a change in circumstances.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a Muslim must strengthen their bond with Allah, the Exalted, by remembering Him much. True remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, consists of three levels. The first is internal remembrance meaning, sincerity to Him. The second level consists of remembering Allah, the Exalted, by speaking good words and avoiding vain and sinful speech. And the highest level is to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, through one's actions as outlined earlier.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith is giving much charity both hidden and open. This includes both the obligatory and voluntary charity. It is important to note, this means giving charity according to one's means whether it is much or little. Allah, the Exalted, does not observe quantity He observes and judges actions based on quality meaning, one's sincerity. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. This leaves Muslims with no excuses but to give charity according to their means. In addition, it is important to give charity regularly instead of once in a while as regular deeds are more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, even if they are little. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465. Finally, those who desire to encourage others to give charity can give it publically. This will lead to them gaining the same reward as those who donate because of their inspiration. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih

Muslim, number 2351. But those who are fearful of showing off, which cancels their reward, should do so privately. Islam has provided many options and opportunities for Muslims to gain much reward which lead to the removal of their burdens in both worlds.

## **An Escape from Difficulties**

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verses 83-84:

*“And [mention] Job, when he called to his Lord, “Indeed, adversity has touched me, and You are the most merciful of the merciful.” So We responded to him and removed what afflicted him of adversity...a reminder for the worshippers.”*

This event teaches Muslims that whenever they encounter a difficult situation they should remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, trusting that He will provide them a way out of it even if this seems impossible at the time. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

*“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”*

A Muslim should understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best for His servants even if the wisdoms behind the difficulty are not obvious. It is a person's reaction which either leads to blessings or the anger of Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to reflect on the countless examples in their own life where they believed something was bad only to change their mind later on and vice versa. This is just like when a person takes a bitter medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. Even though the medicine is bitter they still take it believing it will benefit them. It is

strange how a Muslim can trust a doctor whose knowledge is limited and who is not absolutely certain the bitter medicine will benefit them and fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge is infinite and when He only decrees the best for His servants.

A Muslim should understand the difference between wishful thinking and trust in Allah, the Exalted. The person who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, and then expects Him to help them in difficulties is a wishful thinker. The one who will gain the help of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated in this great event, is the one who sincerely strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience and then trusts His judgment without complaining or questioning His choice.

## **Be Cautious**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 41:

*“And remember Our servant Job, when he called to his Lord, “Indeed, Satan has touched me with hardship and torment.””*

It is important to understand that no matter how much religious knowledge one obtains or how much worship and righteous deeds they perform they will never be safe from the attacks and traps of the Devil. This is because the Devil attacks each person according to how much knowledge they possess and how much righteous deeds they perform. For example, he will try to convince the Muslim who is strict in offering their obligatory prayers not to offer them in congregation at the Mosque or by convincing them to delay their obligatory prayers beyond their starting times as he knows he will not be able to convince them to completely abandon the obligatory prayers. Whereas, in respect to the Muslim who is struggling to establish their obligatory prayers he will attempt to convince them that they are too difficult to establish therefore they should only offer them when they are completely free. He tries to convince those who perform many voluntary righteous deeds not to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to improve their character so that they continue to destroy their good deeds through bad characteristics such as, lying and backing.



The Devil aims to prevent a person from reaching a higher level if he cannot convince them to fall in rank through disobedience to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims should always be on guard against his attacks and traps by persistently striving to increase in rank, improve their character and avoid acts of disobedience which is all achieved by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

## **Strengthening Trust in Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 42:

*"[So Prophet Ayyub, peace be upon him, was told], "Strike [the ground] with your foot; this is a [spring for a] cool bath and drink.""*

This verse mentions an important aspect of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, namely, using one's means, such as physical strength, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The other aspect is fully believing that the outcome of the situation, which is chosen by Allah, the Exalted, is best for all involved. One should strike a balance between these two aspects and not abandon one or the other.

In addition, Muslims often question how they can build up and strengthen their trust in Allah, the Exalted, especially during difficulties. One of the main ways of doing this is through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is because the one who is disobedient to Allah, the Exalted, will always believe Allah, the Exalted, will not help them which in turn weakens their trust in Him. Whereas, the obedient Muslim will firmly believe that as they have fulfilled their duties Allah, the Exalted, will definitely respond to them in their moment of need which in turn strengthens their trust in Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, advises that Allah, the Exalted, responds to a person according to their perception of Him. The disobedient person will always have negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, because of their disobedience. Whereas, an obedient Muslim will always have positive thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, because of their obedience. This thinking can weaken or strengthen a Muslim's trust in Allah, the Exalted. The obedient Muslim trusts that if they fulfilled their side of a business contract their business partner would do the same. Similarly, an obedient Muslim trusts that as they through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, have fulfilled their duties Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil His promises by aiding them throughout their life especially, through difficulties. Whereas, the one who does not fulfil their side of a business contract would not trust or hope that their business partner will fulfil their side. Similarly, a disobedient person would not trust that Allah, the Exalted, would aid them as they failed to fulfil their duties.

To conclude, having and building trust in Allah, the Exalted, is directly linked to His obedience. The more one is obedient the more they will trust in Him. The less they are obedient they less they will trust in Him.

## All Difficulties

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 44:

*“...Indeed, We found him [Prophet Ayyub, peace be upon him] patient...”*

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 492, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a Muslim does not face any type of physical difficulty, irrespective of its size, such as a prick of a thorn, or any emotional difficulty, such as stress, except Allah, the Exalted, erases their sins because of it.

This refers to minor sins as major sins require sincere repentance. This outcome occurs when a Muslim remains patient from the onset of the difficulty until the end of their life. This is important to understand as many people believe they can complain initially and then show patience after. This is not true patience instead it is only acceptance which occurs with the passing of time. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1870. In addition, patience needs to be shown throughout one's life as a person can destroy their reward by showing impatience down the line.

A Muslim should remember that it is far better to have their minor sins erased through these difficulties than to reach the Day of Judgment

while still possessing them. A Muslim should constantly repent and strive to perform righteous deeds in order to erase their minor sins. And if they encounter any physical or emotional difficulties they should remain patient hoping for their minor sins to be erased and to obtain an uncountable reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

## Excellence

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 44:

*“...Indeed, We found him [Prophet Ayyub, peace be upon him]...an excellent servant...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a Muslim cannot make their Islam excellent until they avoid the things which do not concern them.

This Hadith contains an all-encompassing advice which should be applied to every aspect of one's life. It includes a person's speech as well as their other physical actions. It means that a Muslim who desires to perfect their faith must avoid those things, through speech and actions, which do not concern them. And instead they must occupy themselves with those things that do. One should take the things that concern them very seriously and strive to fulfil the responsibilities which accompany them according to the teachings of Islam solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that one would not be perfecting their faith if they avoided things according to their own thinking or desires. But the one who perfects their faith avoids the things which Islam has advised to avoid. Meaning, one should strive to fulfil all their duties, avoid all sins and the things which are disliked in Islam and even avoid the excess use of unnecessary lawful things. Achieving this

excellence is a characteristic of the excellence of faith mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one acts and worships Allah, the Exalted, as if they can observe Him or they at least become fully aware of Allah, the Exalted, observing their every thought and action. Being aware of this divine surveillance will encourage a Muslim to always abstain from sins and hasten towards righteous deeds. The one who does not avoid the things which do not concern them will not reach this level of excellence.

A major aspect of avoiding the things which do not concern a person is linked to speech. The majority of sins occur when a person utters words which do not concern them, such as backbiting and slander. The definition of vain talk is when a person utters words which may not be sinful but are useless and therefore not their concern. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2408, vain speech is hated by Allah, the Exalted. Countless arguments, fights and even physical harm have occurred simply because someone spoke about something which did not concern them. Many families have become divided; many marriages have ended because someone did not mind their business. It is why Allah, the Exalted, has advised in the Holy Quran the different types of useful speech which people should concern themselves with. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

*“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”*

In fact, uttering words which are not a person's concern will be the main reason people enter Hell. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2412, that all speech will be counted against a person unless it is connected to advising good, forbidding evil or the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. This means that all other forms of speech are not a person's concern as they will not benefit them. It is important to note, that advising good encompasses anything which is beneficial in one's worldly and religious life, such as they occupation.

Therefore, Muslims should strive to avoid the things which do not concern them through words and actions so that they can perfect their faith. Put simply, the one who dedicates time to the things which do not concern them will fail in the things which do concern them. And the one who occupies themselves with the things which do concern them will not find time to spend on the things which do not concern them. Meaning, they will achieve success through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.



## **Focusing on Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 44:

*“...Indeed, he [Prophet Ayyub, peace be upon him] was one repeatedly turning back [to Allah].”*

The one who adopts this mentality turns constantly to Allah, the Exalted, by using the worldly blessings they possess, both external and internal, in ways pleasing to Him. As they will ultimately return to Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter they constantly turn to Him in this world also.

Therefore, a Muslim should remember that every worldly blessing they possess is only a means which should aid them in reaching the hereafter safely. It is not an end in itself. For example, wealth is a means one should use in order to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, fulfilling their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. It is not an end or an ultimate goal in itself.

This not only aids a Muslim in maintaining their focus on the hereafter but it also aids them whenever they lose worldly blessings. When a Muslim treats each worldly blessing, such as a child, as a means to please Allah, the Exalted, and reach the hereafter safely then losing it will not have such a detrimental impact on them. They may become sad,

which is an acceptable emotion, but they will not become grieved which leads to impatience and other mental problems, such as depression. This is because they firmly believe the worldly blessing they possessed was only a means so losing it does not cause a loss in the ultimate goal namely, Paradise, the loss of which is disastrous. Therefore, still possessing and concentrating on the ultimate goal will prevent them from becoming grieved.

In addition, they will understand that just like the thing they lost was only a means they firmly believe they will be provided with another means to reach and fulfil their ultimate goal by Allah, the Exalted. This will also prevent them from grieving. Whereas, the one who believes their worldly blessing is the end instead of a means will experience severe grief when losing it as their whole purpose and objective has been lost. This grief will lead to depression and other mental issues.

To conclude, Muslims should treat each blessing they possess as a means to reach the hereafter safely not as an end in itself. This is how one can possess things without being possessed by them. This is how they can keep worldly things in their hands and not in their hearts.

## **Use Worldly Blessings**

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 279, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that once the Holy Prophet Ayyub, peace be upon him, was taking a bath when golden locusts fell on him. He began to collect them in his clothes when Allah, the Exalted, questioned why he was doing that when Allah, the Exalted, had already enriched him. The Holy Prophet Ayyub, peace be upon him, replied that he could never do without the blessings of Allah, the Exalted.

This incident indicates the importance of obtaining and using worldly blessings correctly instead of abandoning or misusing them.

In reality, in most cases nothing in this material world in itself is good or bad, such as wealth. What makes a thing good or bad is the way it is used. It is important to understand that the very purpose of everything which was created by Allah, the Exalted, was for it to be used correctly according to the teachings of Islam. When something is not used correctly it in reality becomes useless. For example, wealth is useful in both worlds when it is used correctly such as being spent on the necessities of a person and their dependents. But it can become useless and even a curse for its bearer if it is not used correctly, such as being hoarded or spent on sinful things. Simply hoarding wealth causes wealth to lose value. How can paper and metal coins one tucks away be useful? In this respect, there is no difference between a blank piece of paper and a note of money. It is only useful when it is used correctly.

So if a Muslim desires all their worldly possessions to become a blessing for them in both worlds all they have to do is use them correctly according to the teachings found in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they use them incorrectly then the same blessing will become a burden and curse for them in both worlds. It is as simple as that.

## **Holy Prophet Shoab, peace be upon him**

### **A Clear Proof**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 85:

*“And to [the people of] Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu‘ayb. He said, “O my people...There has come to you clear evidence from your Lord...””*

In this age, the clear evidence is the Holy Quran.

The Holy Quran possesses an uncountable amount of qualities which separates it from any other worldly book. This aspect of the Holy Quran is so intense that it cannot even be explained or discussed over countless lifetimes. But a few of these qualities will be mentioned here. First of all, in the Holy Quran, Allah, the Exalted, has given an open challenge to the entire universe (not just people) and not only a challenge to those who were present when this divine revelation was revealed but to all of creation till the end of time. The challenge being if the people believed the Holy Quran was not a divine revelation from Allah, the Exalted, then they should produce a chapter that can rival a chapter of the Holy Quran.

There is no book on the entire planet that can and has given this type of open challenge. But over 1400 years ago the Holy Quran gave this challenge to the entire universe and to this day this challenge has not been won by the non-Muslims nor will it ever be God willing.

Another quality of the Holy Quran is that it stated the outcome of future events. But the more amazing thing about these statements is that the outcomes seemed impossible at the time. For example chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 28:

*“It is He Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth that he may make it prevail over all other religions And Sufficient is Allah as witness.”*

When this verse was revealed the entire city of Mecca was Islam so when the people of Mecca heard this verse, unfortunately for them, they believed that Islam was too feeble and would therefore not survive long and certainly would not spread beyond the borders of Mecca let alone the entire world. But within a some years Allah, the Exalted, fulfilled this promise.

Another example of how the Holy Quran prophesied a future event which was unimaginable at the time is found in chapter 30 Ar Rum, verses 2-5:

*“The Romans have been subdued. In the nearby land and after their subjugation they will soon overcome. In a few years. The command is of Allah only before and after. And on that day the believers shall rejoice. With the help of Allah, He helps whom He pleases. And He is the Might, and Merciful.”*

These verses of the Holy Quran were revealed during a time where the Romans (Christians) were at war with the Persians (Fire worshippers). This war has been confirmed by many authentic historic books. At this particular time the Persians were on the verge of winning the war. At one point Rome itself was surrounded by the Persians. But Allah, the Exalted, stated that the Romans would eventually reign victorious. The non-Muslims of Mecca who themselves were idol worshippers favoured the Persians and agreed with the majority that it was impossible for the Romans to win. But Allah, the Exalted, as always proved these verses true and allowed the Romans victory.

A final example which appeals to the scientists of the world is seen in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 33:

*“And it is He Who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon. Each one is floating in a circumference.”*

For centuries scientists have fought over theories on how exactly the solar system is arranged e.g. whether the sun remains still and the Earth rotates around or vice versa. Only relatively recently it has been proven by scientists from all different faiths and backgrounds that each object; sun, moon and the Earth all rotate on their own axes and rotate around each other in a set orbit. But Allah, the Exalted, declared this over 1400 years ago. All the science related verses of the Holy Quran are slowly being proven by scientists today. This is a huge piece of evidence that proves that the Holy Quran are the words of the One and only true God, Allah, the Exalted, who has created this universe and everything in it, because only a Creator can truly explain his creations.

Even though many commands of the Holy Quran may not be understood by people does not mean they are incorrect. Certain verses of the Holy Quran whose wisdom was hidden to man became apparent when society reached a certain level of development. As the whole Holy Quran is a book of wisdom and guidance it must be accepted irrespective if one understands its commands or not. This situation is just like a child who is suffering from a cold and desires ice cream but is not given it by their parent. The child will continue to cry without understanding the wisdom behind but those that possess knowledge will agree with the parent even though outwardly it appears as if the decision of the parent is wronging the child.



## Doing Business

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 85:

*“And to [the people of] Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu‘ayb. He said, “O my people...So fulfill the measure and weight and do not deprive people of their due...””*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings of Islam. In respect to business dealings a Muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when Muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes not striving to con others by making them pay excessively for goods. A Muslim should simply treat others how they desire to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way, a Muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters they should not mistreat others.

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

## **Cure for Corruption**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 85:

*“And to [the people of] Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu‘ayb. He said, “O my people...So fulfill the measure and weight and do not deprive people of their due and cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation...””*

Widespread corruption is quite evident and needs know deep investigation or research to prove its existence. In some cases it occurs out in the open. One of the reasons corruption spreads throughout society to the point that even top government officials are involved occurs after the general public becomes corrupt. When ordinary people mistreat others, through physical or financial means thereby disobeying Allah, the Exalted, believing no one can hold them accountable, then as a punishment Allah, the Exalted, appoints them corrupt leaders and government officials. Meaning, how one acts is how they are treated. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, that when the general public cheat each other financially Allah, the Exalted, punishes them by appointing them oppressive leaders. One aspect of this oppression is corruption which causes the general public great distress. The same Hadith warns that when the general public break their covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then they will be overpowered by their enemies who will confiscate their wealth and property. Again, this is an aspect of corruption where people of influence, such as government officials, freely take the belongings of others without any fear of the consequences.

When the general public becomes corrupt then their leaders and other people in influential social positions are inspired to act in the same way believing that this behaviour is accepted by the general public. This leads to corruption on a national level. But if the general public obeyed Allah, the Exalted, by not mistreating others through corruption then their leaders and those in an influential social position would not dare act in a corrupt way full well knowing the general public would not stand for it. And according to the Hadith quoted earlier, if the general public remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, He would protect them from corrupt officials by appointing people into influential positions who are just in their affairs.

Instead of taking the immature path of blaming others for the widespread corruption Muslims should truly reflect on their own behaviour and if necessary adjust their attitude otherwise corruption in society will only increase with time. No one should believe that as they are not in an influential social position they have no effect on the corruption which occurs in society. As proven by this discussion corruption occurs because of the behaviour of the general public and it therefore can only be removed by the good behaviour of the general public. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

*“...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...”*

## Public Gatherings

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 86:

*“[Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him, said] And do not sit on every path, threatening...”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4815, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people must fulfill the rights of the public road when they meet up in public.

The first thing advised in this Hadith is that Muslims should lower their gaze and not look at things which are unlawful to them. In fact, one should protect each organ of their body such as their tongue and ears in the same way.

The next thing advised in this Hadith is that they should keep their harm away from others. This includes both harm in the form of speech, such as foul language and backbiting and harm caused through physical actions. In fact, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their physical and verbal harm away from people and their possessions. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that one should return the Islamic greeting of peace to others. This includes initiating the Islamic greeting of peace through one's words and showing peace to others in one's actions. It is pure hypocrisy to extend peace to others through one's words and then harm them through their actions.

Finally, the main Hadith under discussion advises Muslims to command good and forbid evil. This should be carried out according to the three levels discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2172. The highest level is to do it with one's actions within the bounds of the law. The next level is to do it with one's words. And the lowest level is to do it with one's heart meaning, secretly. This duty must always be fulfilled according to Islamic knowledge and in a gentle way. Often Muslims advise the correct thing but as they do it in a harsh way they only drive people further away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is therefore vital to combine knowledge with kind behavior so that the advice affects others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

*“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”*

To conclude, it is important to note a Muslim should adopt and show these characteristics towards all people irrespective of their faith.

## Commanding Evil and Forbidding Good

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 86:

*“[Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him, said] And do not sit on every path, threatening and averting from the way of Allah those who believe in Him, seeking to make it [seem] deviant...”*

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.

## **A Different Path**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 86:

*“[Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him, said] And do not sit on every path, threatening and averting from the way of Allah those who believe in Him, seeking to make it [seem] deviant...”*

It is important to understand that generally when one chooses a path which is different from the path of others, such as their relatives and friends, they will face criticism and resistance from them. In fact, the majority of criticism comes from a person's relatives. For example, when a Muslim decides to concentrate more on acting on the teachings of Islam and if it is something their family have not pursued themselves then they will face criticism from them. They will be labelled foolish and extreme by those who they believed would support them on their path. It is important for Muslims to remain steadfast on the lawful path they choose and trust in the help of Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in order to overcome these difficulties.

This is a common reaction from people for when a person chooses a different path in life from others it makes them feel as if their path is bad or evil and this is the reason the person has chosen a different path. Even though the person does not believe this but only chooses a



different path believing it is better for them yet they will still face criticism. It is the same reason all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were criticised by their people as they chose and passively invited others to a different better path.

To conclude, as long as one's path in life is lawful they should remain steadfast and not be deterred by the criticism of others. But this does not mean they should not try to improve their situation and character. It means they should not be deterred from pursuing their lawful choice according to the teachings of Islam.

## Learning Lessons

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 86:

*“[Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him, said]...And see how was the end of the corrupters.”*

It is important for a Muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a Muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their

grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A Muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

## Consequences

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 87:

*“[Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him, said] And if there should be a group among you who has believed in that with which I have been sent and a group that has not believed, then be patient until Allah judges between us...”*

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A Muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a Muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

## The Judge

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 87:

*"[Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him, said]...And He is the best of judges."*

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who judges the actions of His creation and justly chooses the outcome of all things. The Muslim who understands that Allah, the Exalted, only acts with justice will always be pleased with His choices and will therefore show patience in difficulty and gratitude in pleasing situations. The one who is content with the rulings of the Just will find peace in this world and in the next.

A Muslim must act on this divine name by always acting with justice with themselves and in matters concerning others. This includes fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, oneself and others according to the teachings of Islam even if it contradicts one's desires or the desires of others. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and*

*relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”*

The one who achieves this will become a complete balanced believer. This is the character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

## Remain on the Straight Path

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verses 88-89:

*"Said the eminent ones who were arrogant among his people, "We will surely evict you, O Shu'ayb, and those who have believed with you from our city, or you must return to our religion." He said, "Even if we were unwilling? We would have invented against Allah a lie if we returned to your religion after Allah had saved us from it. And it is not for us to return to it..."*

This verse reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain



an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend himself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable Muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

## Real Hope

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 89:

*“[Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him, said]...Upon Allah we have relied...”*

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He acts and treats His servant according to their perception of Him. This means if a Muslim has good thoughts and expects good from Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will not disappoint them. Similarly, if a person harbours negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, such as believing they will not be forgiven then Allah, the Exalted, may act according to their belief.

It is important to note, there is a vast difference between true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which this Hadith refers to and wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is when one fails to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them. This is not true hope it is merely wishful thinking. This is like a farmer who fails to plant any seeds, fails to water their crop and still hopes to reap a large harvest. True hope is when one strives to obey Allah, the Exalted, and whenever they slip up they sincerely repent and then hope for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. This is like a farmer who plants seeds, waters their crop, dedicates effort to

keeping the crop healthy and then hopes for a large harvest. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has summarised this explanation in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Generally speaking, a Muslim should harbour more fear of Allah, the Exalted, during their life as it prevents sins which is superior to hope which inspires one to perform righteous deeds especially, the voluntary type. But during periods of illness and difficulty and especially at the time of death a Muslim should have nothing but hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, even if they have spent their life disobeying Him as this has specifically been commanded by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2877.

## Choose the Right Guide

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 90:

*“Said the eminent ones who disbelieved among his people, “If you should follow Shu‘ayb, indeed, you would then be losers.””*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who guides others to something good will receive the same reward as those who act on their advice. And those who guide others to sins will be held accountable as if they committed the sins.

It is important for Muslims to be careful when advising and guiding others. A Muslim should only advise others in matters of good so that they gain reward from it and avoid advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. A person will not escape punishment on Judgment Day by simply claiming they are only inviting others towards sins even if they did not commit the sins themselves. Allah, the Exalted, will hold both the guide and the follower accountable for their actions. Muslims should therefore only advise others to do the things they would do themselves. If they dislike an action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

Because of this Islamic principle Muslims should ensure they gain the adequate knowledge before advising others as they can easily multiply their own sins if they incorrectly advise others.

In addition, this principle is an extremely easy way for Muslims to gain reward for actions they cannot perform themselves due to a lack of means, such as wealth. For example, a person who is not financially able to donate charity can encourage others to do so and this will result in them gaining the same reward as the one who gave charity.

## Winning and Losing

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 90:

*"Said the eminent ones who disbelieved among his people, "If you should follow Shu'ayb, indeed, you would then be losers.""*

These people defined losing according to the material world meaning, according to them losing out on wealth, social status, authority, family, friends and one's business in the pursuit of the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, makes someone a loser. But the correct definition of a loser or winner is given by Islam not the world.

It is important for Muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, Muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient.” And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves.”*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a Muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah,

the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. 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.”*



## Blessing or a Curse

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verses 91-92:

*“So the earthquake seized them, and they became within their home [corpses] fallen prone. Those who denied Shu‘ayb - it was as though they had never resided there...”*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Do Your Part

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 93:

*“And he [Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him] turned away from them and said, "O my people, I had certainly conveyed to you the messages of my Lord and advised you, so how could I grieve for a disbelieving people?””*

It is important for Muslims to understand an important point in respect to advising others. It is the duty of Muslims to advise others towards good and forbid evil but a Muslim should not behave as if they have been put in charge as controllers over others. This attitude only leads to anger and bitterness especially, when others do not follow their advice. It is best for Muslims to discharge their duty by advising others but they should avoid stressing over the outcome of their advice meaning, whether the person acts on their advice or not. If Allah, the Exalted, advised the greatest teacher and guide of mankind namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to stress over the outcome in many places of the Holy Quran how can a Muslim claim or behave as if they have been put in charge of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

*“So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”*

The Muslim who behaves as a controller will not only become bitter when people fail to follow their advice but it can lead them to giving up advising others which is a duty on all Muslims according to their ability.

In addition, this attitude will also cause Muslims to neglect themselves and their own duties as they are too busy concerning themselves with the duties of others. Therefore, Muslims should remain firm in commanding good and forbidding evil but refrain from observing and bothering about the outcome of their advice.

## Worldly Slaves

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 84:

*“And to Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu‘ayb. He said, “O my people...Indeed, I see you in prosperity, but indeed, I fear for you the punishment of an all-encompassing Day.”*

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.”*

## **Blessings are a Loan**

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 87:

*“They said, “O Shu‘ayb, does your prayer [i.e., religion] command you that we...not do with our wealth what we please?...””*

The nation of the Holy Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him, incorrectly believed that they owned the worldly blessings they possessed. In reality, every blessing was created and belongs to none other than Allah, the Exalted. He has only given worldly blessings to people as a loan. Like all loans, these worldly blessings must be paid back to Allah, the Exalted, either willingly or unwillingly. Willingly is when one uses the blessings according to Islamic teachings. Unwillingly is when these worldly blessings will be forcibly removed from a person either during their life or after their death. Willingly paying the loan back leads to reward in both worlds, unwillingly paying the loan back only leads to trouble in both worlds.

On the other hand the blessings of Paradise will not be given to people as a loan but as a gift. This is why they will be free to use the blessings according to their desires.



The one who willingly pays back the loan of worldly blessings will gain the gift of blessings in Paradise.

## Clear Evidence

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 87:

*“He [Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him] said, "O my people, have you considered: if I am upon clear evidence from my Lord...””*

This clear evidence indicates certainty of faith. A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and

hope of reward in a Muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. 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...”*

For example, if a Muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a Muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

## Advising Correctly

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 88:

*“He [Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him] said, “O my people...And I do not intend to differ from you in that which I have forbidden you...””*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who contradicts their own advice when commanding good and forbidding evil will be punished in Hell.

Instead of following in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by advising only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, many people advise for other reasons, such as to gain popularity and worldly things. For example, some scholars often strive to be in the spotlight of gatherings and events and are not pleased with a seat which is to one side as they desire a central seat. When their intention became like this Allah, the Exalted, removed the positive effect of their advice and thus they now have little positive influence over their listeners. They should have shown a practical example instead of saying one thing and doing another. This caused their advice to become ineffective.

Muslims should strive to always act on their own advice before commanding others to do so as behaving in this manner is hated by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

*“Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not do.”*

This does not mean one must become perfect before advising others as this is not possible. Instead, they should correct their intention and prove this through their actions by striving to act on their own advice before advising others. Only with this attitude will they avoid the punishment mentioned in this Hadith. The failure in acting on this principle has caused the advice of Muslims to become ineffective even though the number of advisers has dramatically increased over the years.

## Agree to Disagree

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 88:

*“He [Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him] said, “O my people...I only intend reform as much as I am able...””*

As all people have not been created the same they are bound to disagree on certain things. In matters related to religion and those which differentiate between lawful and unlawful things a Muslim must remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of who challenges or disagrees with them. But in matters where the choice is between to lawful worldly options a Muslim is entitled to offer their opinion to others when they are requested to. But they should not waste their time nor stress if others disagree with their opinion. When one holds onto these disagreements over time they can cause enmity to build up between people which can lead to fractured and broken relationships. This can even result in the sin of severing ties with people. So in cases like this it is important for Muslims to let things go and not harbour a negative feeling 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 a difference in their characteristics and mentality. Understanding and acting on this advice is a branch of finding peace in this world.

## Strength to Succeed

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 88:

*“He [Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him] said, “O my people...And my success is not but through Allah...””*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6464, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person’s deeds will not take them to Paradise.

A Muslim must understand that their righteous deeds are a blessing from Allah, the Exalted, as the inspiration, knowledge, strength and opportunity to perform them comes from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Understanding this fact prevents the deadly characteristic of pride. An atom’s worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.



## **Reliance on Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 88:

*“He [Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him] said, “...Upon Him I have relied...””*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2344, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if people truly trusted Allah, the Exalted, He would provide for them just like He provides for birds. They leave their nests hungry in the morning and return in the evening satisfied.

Truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is something which is felt in the heart but is proven through the limbs meaning, when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

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

The aspect of trust which is internal involves firmly believing that only Allah, the Exalted, can provide one with beneficial things and protect them from harmful things both in worldly and religious matters. A Muslim understands that no one except Allah, the Exalted, can give, withhold, harm or benefit someone.

It is important to note, that truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, does not mean one should abandon using the means which Allah, the Exalted, has provided, such as medicine. As the main Hadith under discussion clearly mentions that the birds leave their nests actively searching for provision. When one uses the strength and means provided by Allah, the Exalted, according to the teachings of Islam they are undoubtedly obeying Him. This is in fact, the outward element of trusting in Allah, the Exalted. This has been made clear in many verses and Hadiths. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 71:

*“O you who have believed, take your precaution...”*

In reality, the outward activity is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and trusting Allah, the Exalted, inwardly is the inward state of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One should not abandon the outward tradition even if they possess the inward state of trust.

Actions and using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting Him. In this respect, actions can be split into three categories. The first are those actions of obedience which Allah, the

Exalted, commands Muslims to do so that they can avoid Hell and obtain Paradise. Abandoning these while claiming trust that Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them is simply wishful thinking and is therefore blameworthy.

The second type of actions are those means which Allah, the Exalted, has created in this world in order for people to live in it safely, such as eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty and wearing warm clothes in cold weather. A person who abandons these and causes harm to themselves is blameworthy. However, there are some people who have been provided special strength by Allah, the Exalted, so that they can avoid these means without harming themselves. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used to fast for days on end uninterrupted but forbade others from doing the same as Allah, the Exalted, provided for him directly without the need for food. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1922. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed for the fourth rightly guided Caliph Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, so that he would not feel excess cold or heat. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 117. Therefore, if a person turns away from these means but is provided with the strength to endure without failing in their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people then it is acceptable otherwise it is blameworthy.

The third type of actions in respect to trusting in Allah, the Exalted, are those things which have been set as a customary practice which Allah, the Exalted, sometimes breaks for certain people. An example of this are the people who become cured of illnesses without the need of medicine. This is quite common especially in poorer countries where medicine is difficult to obtain. This is linked to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2144, which advises that no person will die until they utilize every ounce of their provision which was allocated to them, which according to another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, was

over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. So the one who truly realises this Hadith might not seek provision actively knowing that what was allocated to them so long ago cannot miss them. So for this person the customary means of obtaining provision such as obtaining it through a job is broken by Allah, the Exalted. This is a high and rare rank. Only the one who can behave in such a manner without complaining or panicking nor expecting things from people is free of blame if they choose this path. It is important to note, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692, that it is a sin for a person to fail in providing for their dependents even though they may be on this high rank.

Having real trust in Allah, the Exalted, leads to being content with destiny. Meaning, whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them they accept without complaint and without desiring things to change as they firmly trust that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the 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.”*

To conclude, it is best to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by using the lawful means one has been granted firmly believing they are from Allah, the Exalted, and trust internally that only what Allah, the Exalted, decides will occur, which is undoubtedly the best choice for each person whether they observe this or not.

## Truly Listening

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 91:

*“They said, “O Shu‘ayb, we do not understand much of what you say...””*

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier yet the strength of Muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many Muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge namely, they believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of Muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some Muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

## True Greatness

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 91:

*“They said, “O Shu‘ayb...we consider you among us as [socially] weak...”*

This verse reminds Muslims that greatness and true success is not connected to worldly things, such as wealth or fame. A person may obtain some worldly success through these things but it is quite obvious if one turns the pages of history that this type of success is very temporary and it eventually becomes a burden and regret for a person. A Muslim should never believe that superiority lies in these things thereby dedicating themselves to obtaining them while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Nor should they look down at others who do not possess these worldly things believing they have no value or significance as this attitude contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6071, that the people of Paradise are those who are considered insignificant by society and concluded that if they took an oath on something Allah, the Exalted, would fulfil it for them.

True honour, success and greatness in this world and the next only lies in piety. So the more one sincerely strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and faces destiny with

patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the greater they are even if they appear insignificant to society. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A Muslim should therefore search for true success in this and not waste their time and efforts in searching for it in worldly things otherwise they may well reach the hereafter a great loser. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

*“Say, “Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.””*

## **Neglecting Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 92:

*“He [Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him] said, “...But you put Him [Allah, the Exalted] behind your backs [in neglect]...””*

The Holy Quran has made it clear that when one neglects the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which includes 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, they will encounter continuous mental and physical difficulties. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

*“And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life...”*

Therefore, it is important for Muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as He 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.

## **Fulfill Your Potential**

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 93:

*“[Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him, said] And O my people, work according to your ability...”*

The Devil tries to convince Muslims to always observe those who are worse than them in behaviour in order to justify their lack of striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and improving their character and behaviour for the better. For example, a Muslim who offers their obligatory prayers once in a while will observe someone who does not pray at all in order to make themselves feel better. A thief will look at a murderer and convince themselves stealing is not so bad. The examples are endless. It is very strange how these Muslims so easily observe those who appear worse than them in order to justify their lack of effort in obeying Allah, the Exalted, but these same people will not observe those who are in a worse off position than them when they face difficulties. For example, the person who suffers from back pain will not observe the one who is physically disabled so that it prevents them from complaining. This attitude has specifically been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513.

In addition, if observing those who appear worse in their behaviour does not save one from punishment in a worldly court, such as a thief being

pardoned by a judge because there are many murderers in the world, how can one imagine this excuse will hold up in the court of Allah, the Exalted?

Muslims should therefore avoid this trap of the Devil by observing those who appear better than them so that they are inspired to improve their character and behaviour progressively for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This is what Allah, the Exalted, demands meaning, He does not demand perfection.

## With the Righteous or Sinful

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verse 94:

*“...We saved Shu‘ayb and those who believed with him, by mercy from Us. And the shriek seized those who had wronged...”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person who imitates a people is counted as one of them.

All Muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly warns that a Muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

But those who verbally declare their love for the righteous and fail to imitate them and instead imitate the characteristics found in hypocrites and the sinful will be considered and judged as one of them. This does

not mean they will lose their faith but it means they will be judged as disobedient Muslims. How can a disobedient Muslim be counted as an obedient Muslim and end up with the righteous? This is only wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 20:

*“Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise. The companions of Paradise - they are the attainers [of success].”*

## Positive Effect

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 180:

*"[Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him, said] And I do not ask you for it any payment. My payment is only from the Lord of the worlds."*

Many people have come and gone who have stood up for some sort of cause whether it was to do with women's rights, human rights, the poor, or something else, yet only a small per cent of these people had a positive impact on society. The majority had no positive effect and instead became footnotes in history. One of the reasons for this is a lack of sincerity. If one turns the pages of history they will observe that those who acted with the correct intention meaning, to truly benefit society without any ulterior motives were granted success even if they were not Muslims. Benefit to others is something Allah, the Exalted, loves and He therefore grants success to all those who sincerely strive for this end.

Those who did not achieve a positive effect on society lacked this good intention as they desired something else, such as fame. In most cases their bad intention is quite evident as their words and actions clearly contradict each other. For example, some claim to stand up for the rights of women then happily take part in advertising campaigns which show women to be nothing except ornaments to be gawked at. If their actions supported their claims they would have instead taught the advertising companies that a woman's intelligence, good character and inner

strength are what should be displayed to the world through their advertising campaigns.

Many of these people who claim to stand up for different causes are in a position of political and social influence and they possess much wealth yet, their positive influence on society is minimal and very short lived. On the other hand, those who may not have possessed such influence changed the attitude of millions through their sincerity. They only desired to benefit society; they did not seek anything else. Because of their sincerity their positive influence and remembrance endured long after they departed this world whereas, those whose intention was corrupt were quickly forgotten even while they were still alive.

So if one desires to succeed in the material world or more importantly in matters of faith they should strive to correct their intention. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, judges people based on their intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

## Perjury

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 183:

*“[Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him, said] And do not deprive people of their due...”*

A branch of this is when one illegally takes the belongings of others through a legal court case. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2673, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who acts as a false witness in order to unlawfully take the possessions of others will meet Allah, the Exalted, while He is angry with them.

It is important to note, this applies to taking the possessions of all people, irrespective of their faith. This will be the outcome even if one obeys Allah, the Exalted, in other aspects of their life, such as offering the obligatory prayers. Unfortunately, this commonly occurs especially, in third world countries where Muslims file false claims in legal courts in order to take something which does not belong to them, such as wealth and properties. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2654, it is one of the greatest of major sins. In fact, this Hadith places perjury next to polytheism and disobedience to parents. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, has done the same in the Holy Quran. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 30:



*“...So avoid the uncleanness of idols and avoid false statement.”*

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2373, gives a severe warning to a person who does not sincerely repent from being a false witness. If they fail to repent they will not move on the Day of Judgment until Allah, the Exalted, sends them to Hell. In fact, the one who acts as a false witness in order to take something which they have no right to will be sent to Hell even if the thing they took was a twig of a tree. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 353.

Being a false witness is such a serious sin as it includes many other terrible sins, such as lying. The false witness commits a sin against the person who they are testifying against. This sin will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until the victim forgives them first. If they do not the false witness's good deeds will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the false witness in order to establish justice on Judgement Day. This may well cause the false witness to be hurled into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. The false witness also commits a sin if they testify on someone else's behalf so that the latter can take something which they have no right to. This attitude clearly challenges the command of the Holy Quran which advises Muslims to not aid each other in evil but instead help each other in good things. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

The false witness will also commit further sins by using something which has become unlawful because of the way it was obtained. For example, if a person obtained wealth in this manner and then gave it in charity it would be rejected and recorded as a sin as Allah, the Exalted, only accepts the lawful. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. In fact, anything they do with the wealth will be absent of grace and a sin as it was obtained unlawfully.

It is a duty on all Muslims to always speak the truth whether it is in normal everyday conversations or under oath in a court case. Lying in all forms leads to sins which in turn lead to Hell. The one who continues lying will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. It does not take a scholar to work out what is most likely to happen to someone on Judgment Day who has been labelled a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

## **Respond Today**

The next discussion is based on chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 36:

*“And to Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu‘ayb, and he said, “O my people...expect [prepare for] the Last Day...””*

The trumpet blast will lead to the death of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7381. The important thing to learn is that this is a call which no one can or will reject responding to. It will lead to the resurrection and final judgment. Therefore, Muslims should respond to the call of Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through sincere obedience by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verse 24:

*“O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life...”*

Whoever responds to this call in this world will find the final call easy to endure and respond to. Whereas, the one who lives heedless to the call of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will not find peace in it and they will be

forced to answer the call of the trumpet which will be a great burden for them to endure and respond to. A person can only ignore the call of Allah, the Exalted, for so long as the final call will occur, sooner or later, and no one will be able to avoid or ignore it. If this is inevitable it makes sense that one respond to it now, today, instead of living in heedlessness. If one hears the trumpet blast while heedless no action or regret will benefit them and what comes after for this person will be even more terrifying.

## **Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him**

### **Right Guidance**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 53:

*“And [recall] when We gave Moses the Scripture and criterion that perhaps you would be guided.”*

In this age, the divine scripture and criterion which differentiates between good and evil, success and failure, is the Holy Quran.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

## **Increasing Trust in Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 60:

*“And [recall] when Moses prayed for water for his people, so We said, “Strike with your staff the stone.” And there gushed forth from it twelve springs...””*

This verse mentions an important aspect of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, namely, using one’s means, such as physical strength, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The other aspect is fully believing that the outcome of the situation, which is chosen by Allah, the Exalted, is best for all involved. One should strike a balance between these two aspects and not abandon one or the other.

In addition, Muslims often question how they can build up and strengthen their trust in Allah, the Exalted, especially during difficulties. One of the main ways of doing this is through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is because the one who is disobedient to Allah, the Exalted, will always believe Allah, the Exalted, will not help them which in turn weakens their trust in Him. Whereas, the obedient Muslim will firmly believe that as they have fulfilled their duties Allah, the Exalted, will definitely respond to them in their moment of need which in turn strengthens their trust in Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, advises that Allah, the Exalted, responds to a person according to their perception of Him. The disobedient person will always have negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, because of their disobedience. Whereas, an obedient Muslim will always have positive thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, because of their obedience. This thinking can weaken or strengthen a Muslim's trust in Allah, the Exalted. The obedient Muslim trusts that if they fulfilled their side of a business contract their business partner would do the same. Similarly, an obedient Muslim trusts that as they through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, have fulfilled their duties Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil His promises by aiding them throughout their life especially, through difficulties. Whereas, the one who does not fulfil their side of a business contract would not trust or hope that their business partner will fulfil their side. Similarly, a disobedient person would not trust that Allah, the Exalted, would aid them as they failed to fulfil their duties.

To conclude, having and building trust in Allah, the Exalted, is directly linked to His obedience. The more one is obedient the more they will trust in Him. The less they are obedient they less they will trust in Him.



## Balanced Diet

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 60:

*“And [recall] when Moses prayed for water for his people, so We said, “Strike with your staff the stone.” And there gushed forth from it twelve springs...Eat and drink from the provision of Allah...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2380, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the importance of a balanced diet. He advised that one should split their stomach into three parts. The first part is for food, the second part is for drink and the last part should be left empty for breathing.

This can be achieved when one stops eating before they reach their fill. This was the behaviour of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

If people were to act on this advice they would be safe from both physical and mental illnesses. In fact, according to many knowledgeable people one of the main causes of illness is indigestion.

In respect to the heart little food leads to a soft heart, humility of self and weakness of desires and anger. A full stomach results in laziness which prevents worship and other righteous deeds. It induces sleep which causes one to miss out on the voluntary and even the obligatory night prayers. It prevents reflection which is the key to assessing one's deeds and therefore changing one's character for the better. The one with a full stomach forgets the poor and is therefore less likely to help them. All these negative effects lead to a hard heart. The one who possesses a hard heart will not be safe on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

*“The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart.”*

The one who is only concerned about their stomach becomes distracted from more important things, such as learning and acting on religious knowledge. Muslims should know that the most fed in this world will be the hungriest on the Day of Judgment. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2478.

Therefore, Muslims should strive to obtain a balanced diet so that they avoid the negative effects discussed which will undoubtedly hinder their success in both this world and the next.

## Cravings

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 60:

*“And [recall] when Moses prayed for water for his people, so We said, “Strike with your staff the stone.” And there gushed forth from it twelve springs...Eat and drink from the provision of Allah, and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption.””*

Corruption can be caused by the extreme love for wealth and 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.

## The Bestower

The next discussion is based on chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 20:

*"...Moses said to his people, "O my people, remember the favor of Allah upon you..."*

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is infinitely bountiful and bestows favours and blessings without recompense or external cause. He gives generously without being asked.

The Muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A Muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a Muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

A Muslim should act on this divine name by bestowing the blessings they have been given to others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. The one who gives to others will be given more than they could have ever imagined. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.”*



## Representing Allah, the Exalted

The next discussion is based on chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 20:

*"...Moses said to his people, "O my people, remember the favor of Allah upon you when He appointed among you prophets and made you possessors and gave you that which He had not given anyone among the worlds.""*

These blessings were granted so that they could fulfill their duty as the ambassadors of Allah, the Exalted. This role has now been given to the Muslim nation. . It is extremely important for Muslims to fulfill this duty according to their potential. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many Muslims today believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A Muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A Muslim

should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

In addition, this important position should remind Muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted, become angry with the Muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

## Do Not Retreat

The next discussion is based on chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 21:

*"[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said] O my people, enter the blessed land [i.e., Palestine] which Allah has assigned to you and do not turn back [from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted] and [thus] become losers."*

This incident reminds Muslims to always remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, under all circumstances.

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.”*

## Being Cowardly

The next discussion is based on chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verses 21-22:

*"[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said] O my people, enter the blessed land [i.e., Palestine] which Allah has assigned to you...They said, "O Moses, indeed within it is a people of tyrannical strength, and indeed, we will never enter it until they leave it; but if they leave it, then we will enter.""*

Even though Allah, the Exalted, had guaranteed them victory they still behaved cowardly.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2511, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned Muslims not to behave cowardly. This attitude prevents trust in Allah, the Exalted, and in what He has promised, such as one's guaranteed provision. It can cause one to seek their provision in doubtful and unlawful means which will destroy a person in both worlds. Allah, the Exalted, does not accept any deed which has a foundation in the unlawful. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

In addition, being a coward prevents one from striving against the Devil and one's inner Devil which requires genuine struggle. This will lead one

to fail in obeying Allah, the Exalted, which 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. And it will therefore prevent them from fulfilling the rights of people. Both worldly and religious success requires effort and time. A coward will be too afraid to undertake this struggle and will instead be lazy which leads to failure in both worldly and religious matters.



## **Avoiding Bad Company**

The next discussion is based on chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verses 21-22:

*"[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] said, "My Lord, indeed I do not possess [i.e., control] except myself and my brother, so part us from the defiantly disobedient people.""*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5534, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between a good and bad companion. The good companion is like a person who sells perfume. Their companion will either obtain some perfume or at least be affected by the pleasant smell. Whereas, a bad companion is like a blacksmith, if their companion does not burn their clothes they will certainly be affected by the smoke.

Muslims must understand that the people they accompany will have an effect on them whether this affect is positive or negative, obvious or subtle. It is not possible to accompany someone and not be affected by it. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, confirms that a person is on their companion's religion. Meaning, a person adopts the characteristics of their companion. It is therefore important for Muslims to always accompany the righteous as they will undoubtedly affect them in a positive way meaning, they will inspire them to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Whereas, bad companions will either inspire one

to disobey Allah, the Exalted, or they will encourage a Muslim to concentrate on the material world over preparing for the hereafter. This attitude will become a great regret for them on Judgment Day even if the things they strive for are lawful but beyond their needs.

Finally, as a person will end up with those they love in the hereafter according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, a Muslim must practically show they love for the righteous by accompanying them in this world. But if they accompany bad or heedless people then it proves and indicates they love for them and their ultimate destination in the hereafter. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

*“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”*

## **Prophetic Mission**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 104:

*"And Moses said, "O Pharaoh, I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds.""*

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is for them to be sincerely obeyed and followed. 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 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.

## **Appreciating Evidence**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 105:

*“[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said]...I have come to you with clear evidence from your Lord...”*

It is important to note that the clear evidence from Allah, the Exalted, in the form of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, can only be appreciated after one strives to understand and act on them. This will lead to certainty of faith.

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...”*



## Criticism

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verses 106-109:

*"[Pharaoh] said, "If you have come with a sign, then bring it forth, if you should be of the truthful." So he [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] threw his staff, and suddenly it was a serpent, manifest. And he drew out his hand; thereupon it was white [with radiance] for the observers. Said the eminent among the people of Pharaoh, "Indeed, this is a learned magician.""*

A Muslim should always remember that there are two types of people. The first are rightly guided as their criticism of others is based on the criticism and advice found in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This type will always be constructive and guide one to blessings and the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These people will also refrain from over or under praising others. Over praising others can cause them to become proud and arrogant. Under praising others can lead them to becoming lazy and put them off from doing good. This reaction is often observed in children. Praising according to the teachings of Islam will inspire others to strive harder in both worldly and religious matters and it will prevent them from becoming arrogant. Therefore, the praise and constructive criticism of this person should be accepted and acted upon even if comes from a stranger.

The second type of person criticises based on their own desires. This criticism is mostly unconstructive and only shows one's bad mood and attitude. These people often over and under praise others as they act based on their own desires. The negative effects of these two were mentioned earlier. Therefore, the criticism and praise of this person should be ignored in the majority of cases even if it comes from a loved one as it will only cause one to become unnecessarily sad in cases of criticism and arrogant in cases of praise.

It is important to remember that a person who over praises others will often over criticise them too. The rule one should always follow is that they should only accept the criticism and praise based on the teachings of Islam. All other things should be ignored and not taken personally.

## Seekers of Truth

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verses 113-123:

*"And the magicians came to Pharaoh. They said, "Indeed for us is a reward if we are the predominant."...They said, "O Moses, either you throw [your staff], or we will be the ones to throw [first]." He said, "Throw," and when they threw, they bewitched the eyes of the people and struck terror into them, and they presented a great [feat of] magic. And We inspired to Moses, "Throw your staff," and at once it devoured what they were falsifying...And the magicians fell down in prostration [to Allah]. They said, "We have believed in the Lord of the worlds. The Lord of Moses and Aaron." Said Pharaoh, "You believed in him before I gave you permission. Indeed, this is a conspiracy which you conspired in the city to expel therefrom its people. But you are going to know.""*

The magicians accepted the truth when they observed it as they did not possess stubbornness or pride. Whereas, Pharaoh rejected the clear evidence which he observed simply because of his pride and stubbornness.

It is important for Muslims especially, in this day and age to understand the difference between those who discuss certain topics which may be considered controversial in order to genuinely benefit people through a positive change and those who simply discuss these issues in order to attract the attention of others. Those who desire a positive change in

society will always show respect and good character towards others especially, to those they are challenging through their words. They never result to vulgar language or actions in order to declare their point of view. They instead study and understand the subject they are debating about without misinterpreting or falsifying information in order to support their point of view. Their criticism is always constructive and their genuine and sincere intention to improve the society is shown through their behaviour and words. These are the people who Muslims should pay attention to as if they are correct it will improve society for everyone. But if their viewpoint is wrong they will accept the truth when it is made clear to them by others. But those who behave opposite to this correct attitude, whether they are found in the media or anywhere else, should simply be ignored as they do not desire to improve the lives of people. They are starved for attention and like an infant act out in order to attract some attention from others. Muslims should not circulate and pass on videos or other content which are linked to people like this as they are playing right into their hands and giving them the attention they so badly desire. Debating with these people is a complete waste of time because of their evil intention and behaviour. Muslims should instead place their efforts in other useful places which benefit them and others in both worlds.

## Small Trials

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verses 124-126:

*"[Pharaoh said] I will surely cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides; then I will surely crucify you all. They [the magicians who accepted faith in the time of Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] said, "Indeed, to our Lord we will return. And you do not resent us except because we believed in the signs of our Lord when they came to us..."*

It is important for Muslims to understand that Allah, the Exalted, does not demand Muslims to overcome the difficulties which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, endured. For example, these verses mention when Pharaoh crucified the magicians who accepted faith in Allah, the Exalted.

In comparison, the difficulties Muslims face now are not as difficult as those the righteous predecessors faced. Muslims should therefore be grateful that they are only required to make a few small sacrifices, such as sacrificing some sleep to offer the obligatory dawn prayer and some wealth to donate the obligatory charity. Allah, the Exalted, is not commanding them to leave their homes and families for His sake. This gratitude must be shown practically by using the blessings one possesses in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, when a Muslim faces difficulties they should remember the difficulties the righteous predecessors faced and how they overcame them through steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This knowledge can provide a Muslim the strength to overcome their difficulties as they know the righteous predecessors were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they endured more severe difficulties with patience. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, advises that the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, endured the most difficult of tests and they are undoubtedly the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted.

If a Muslim follows the steadfast attitude of the righteous predecessors it is hoped they will end up with them in the hereafter.

## **Building Patience**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 126:

*“They [the magicians who accepted faith in the time of Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] said, “...Our Lord, pour upon us patience...”*”

In a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the importance of understanding that every difficulty a person faces will be followed by ease. This reality has also been mentioned in the Holy Quran for example, chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 7:

*“...Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease [i.e., relief].”*

It is important for Muslims to understand this reality as it gives rise to patience and even contentment. Being uncertain over the changes in circumstances can lead one to impatience, ingratitude and even towards unlawful things, such as unlawful provision. But the one who firmly believes all difficulties will eventually be replaced with ease will patiently wait for this change fully trusting in the teachings of Islam. This patience is much loved by Allah, the Exalted, and greatly rewarded. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 146:

*“...And Allah loves the steadfast.”*

This is the reason Allah, the Exalted, has mentioned numerous examples within the Holy Quran when difficult situations were followed by ease and blessings. For example, the following verse of the Holy Quran mentions the great difficulty the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, faced from his people and how Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the great flood. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 76:

*“And [mention] Noah, when he called [to Allah] before [that time], so We responded to him and saved him and his family from the great affliction [i.e., the flood].”*

Another example is found in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 69:

*“We [i.e., Allah] said, “O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.”*

The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, faced a great difficulty in the form of a great fire but Allah, the Exalted, made it cool and peaceful for him.



These examples and many more have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that Muslims understand that a moment of difficulty will eventually be followed by ease for those who obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Therefore, it is important for Muslims to study these Islamic teachings in order to observe the countless cases where Allah, the Exalted, granted ease to His obedient servants after they faced difficulties. If Allah, the Exalted, has saved His obedient servants from great difficulties mentioned in the divine teachings then He can and will save the obedient Muslims facing smaller difficulties also.

## Living and Dying on Faith

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 126:

*“They [the magicians who accepted faith in the time of Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] said, "...and let us die as Muslims [in submission to You].”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7232, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people will be resurrected on Judgment Day in the same state they died on Earth.

This means that if a person dies on good they will be resurrected on good. But if they die on evil they will be raised in an evil way.

A Muslim should not live in heedlessness by believing just because they have faith in Islam it guarantees they will die and therefore be raised in a good state on Judgment Day. If they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then die in this state without sincerely repenting then they will be raised in an evil way. It does not take a scholar to determine what will happen to this person on Judgment Day.

From this Hadith one can understand that the way they will die will be in the same state they have lived. Meaning, if they lived in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will die in a good state and therefore be raised in a good state which includes being raised with the righteous as they practically followed in their footsteps. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

A Muslim should therefore not walk the path to Hell by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and believe that they will somehow be raised with the pious and end up in Paradise.

## Divine Help

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 128:

*“Said Moses to his people, “Seek help through Allah...””*

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.

## **The Abaser and Exalter**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 128:

*“Said Moses to his people, "...Indeed, the earth belongs to Allah. He causes to inherit it whom He wills of His servants. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.””*

Allah, the Exalted, is the Abaser and the Exalter. Allah, the Exalted, is the One who abases those who disobey Him. Even if a disobedient person gains some worldly success it will ultimately become a curse for them. Allah, the Exalted, is the One who exalts those who obey Him by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Even if an obedient Muslim faces trials and difficulties in the world they will ultimately be exalted by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

A Muslim who understands this divine name will therefore not seek worldly success by pleasing the creation or through worldly things if it leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, as they know this path only leads to ultimate abasement and disgrace in both worlds.

A Muslim must act on this divine name by praising the things which Allah, the Exalted, has raised and disliking the things which Allah, the Exalted, has abased. This must be shown through actions not just words. For example, they must praise the hereafter by actively striving to prepare for it. And they must dislike the excess of this material world knowing Allah, the Exalted, has dispraised it as it prevents a Muslim from adequately preparing for the hereafter.



## **Times of Ease**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 129:

*"...He [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] said, "Perhaps your Lord will destroy your enemy and grant you succession in the land and see how you will do.""*

Muslims often increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, such as attending the Mosques for the congregational prayers or reciting more spiritual exercises in times of difficulty. But in times of ease they often relax and become lazy. But it is important to note, that generally it is more important to be more on guard and increase one's obedience during times of ease than times of difficulty. This is because one often sins more during times of ease than difficulty, such as abandoning their obligatory duties. If one reviews the different misguided people in history, such as Pharaoh and Quroon they will observe that their sins only multiplied during times of ease. Someone who is facing a difficulty where they are stuck and have no option but to patiently wait for relief is less likely to sin as they desire to be relieved of their difficulty. Whereas, a person experiencing times of ease will be in a better position to enjoy and over indulge in worldly things which often leads to sins. For example, a person facing poverty is less likely to sin as many sins require wealth. Whereas, a wealthy person is in an easier position to commit those sins, such as purchasing alcohol or drugs. Therefore, Muslims should take note of this and ensure they maintain or

even increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, during times of ease so that they do not fall into sins and disobedience.

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

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

## **Good is from Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 131:

*“But when good [i.e., provision] came to them [the people of Pharaoh], they said, “This is ours [by right].” ...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6464, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person's deeds will not take them to Paradise.

A Muslim must understand that their righteous deeds are a blessing from Allah, the Exalted, as the inspiration, knowledge, strength and opportunity to perform them comes from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Understanding this fact prevents the deadly characteristic of pride. An atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Therefore, a Muslim must ensure they fulfill all three aspects of gratitude so that they avoid becoming a denier of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who is

ungrateful in reality, scorns the One who granted them the blessings.  
Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

*“...And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.”*

The three aspects of gratitude are to internally acknowledge Allah, the Exalted, as the sole Creator and Provider of all blessings. An aspect of this is to correct one's intention so that they only perform actions to please Allah, the Exalted. The next aspect is to praise Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue. And the final and highest aspect is to practically show gratitude through one's actions by using each blessing as prescribed by Islam in order to please 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]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'”*

As true gratitude leads to an increase in blessings Muslims should fear that showing ingratitude may cause the blessings they possess to either be taken away from them or for their blessings to be used against them by becoming a burden and a curse for them in both worlds. It is important to note, even if a Muslim becomes truly grateful they will still face tests and difficulties as they are guaranteed. But if they behave in the correct way

they will be guided through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and body in this world and a great reward in the hereafter.

## Bad Omens

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 131:

*“...if a bad [condition] struck them [the people of Pharaoh], they saw an evil omen in Moses and those with him...”*

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 909, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against paying attention to bad omens as behaving in this manner is like associating something to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, polytheism. Instead one should rely on Allah, the Exalted, to remove any evil from them.

Paying attention to evil omens means that it affects one's behaviour and actions. Even though black magic and the evil eye is real it is important to understand that nothing in the universe from the fluttering of a leaf to the sun rising occurs without the choice and will of Allah, the Exalted. And if the entire creation tried to make something happen such as harming someone they would not be able to achieve it if Allah, the Exalted, did not allow it to occur. Similarly, if the entire creation desired to provide someone with benefit they would not be able to unless Allah, the Exalted, so willed. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. Therefore, a Muslim should remain steadfast by not bothering with evil omens or fearing witches and wizards as they cannot cause something

which Allah, the Exalted, has not willed from occurring. Instead, one should remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions, facing destiny with patience and continue with their lawful actions and choices and only seek protection from evil things according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while fully trusting in the support of Allah, the Exalted. They should not turn to people and things which contradict this as in the long run it will only lead to paranoia and trouble which in most cases is worse than their initial fear.

## **The Will of Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 131:

*“But when good [i.e., provision] came to them [the people of Pharaoh], they said, “This is ours [by right].” And if a bad [condition] struck them, they saw an evil omen in Moses and those with him. Unquestionably, their fortune is with Allah, but most of them do not know.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, there are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But there are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:



*“Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”*

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”*

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a Muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so Muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

*“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”*

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

*“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”*

## Breaking Promises

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verses 134-135:

*“And when the punishment descended upon them [the people of Pharaoh], they said, “O Moses, invoke for us your Lord by what He has promised you. If you [can] remove the punishment from us, we will surely believe you, and we will send with you the Children of Israel.” But when We removed the punishment from them until a term which they were to reach, then at once they broke their word.”*

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?

## Outcome of Tests

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 137:

*“And We caused the people who had been oppressed to inherit the eastern regions of the land and the western ones, which We had blessed. And the good word [i.e., decree] of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel [the nation of Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] because of what they had patiently endured...”*

Even though tests and trials have affected believers since the dawn of time particularly in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet it seems like the modern day tests only lead to more difficulties and humiliation for Muslims. Whereas, the tests which the righteous predecessors faced only led to their honour in both worlds. The main reason for this difference in the outcome and result of tests is that when the righteous predecessors faced tests in fact, greater tests than the modern day Muslims, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, they faced their tests and difficulties while sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This resulted in them safely passing the test and receiving great honour and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Whereas, many Muslims in this day and age face tests but do not remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They fail to understand that success and honour through tests is only granted to those who remain steadfast on the

obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whereas, being disobedient only leads to disgrace. Therefore, Muslims should not worship Allah, the Exalted, on an edge whereby they are only obedient to Him in times of ease and turn away from Him angrily and disobediently in times of difficulty. This is not real servant hood or obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Simply put, no action will aid Muslims in the long run if it is not based on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Disobedience will only lead from one difficulty to another, one disgrace to another. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 147:

*“What would Allah do with [i.e., gain from] your punishment if you are grateful and believe?...”*

## **A Real Believer**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 143:

*"...he [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] said, "Exalted are You!...I am the first [among my people] of the believers.""*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13, that a person cannot become a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This does not mean a Muslim will lose their faith if they fail to adopt this characteristic. It means that a Muslim's faith will not be complete until they act on this advice. This Hadith also indicates that a Muslim will not perfect their faith until they also dislike for others what they dislike for themselves. This is supported by another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586. It advises that the Muslim nation is like one body. If one part of the body is in pain the rest of the body shares the pain. This mutual feeling includes loving and hating for others what one loves and hates for themselves.

A Muslim can only achieve this status when their heart is free from evil traits, such as envy. These evil traits will always cause one to desire better for themselves. So in reality, this Hadith is an indication that one should purify their heart by adopting good characteristics, such as being forgiving, and eliminate evil traits, such as envy. This is only possible through learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for Muslims to understand that desiring good for others will cause them to lose out on good things. The treasury of Allah, the Exalted, has no limits so there is no need to adopt a selfish and greedy mentality.

Desiring good for others includes striving to aid others in anyway one can, such as financial or emotional support, in the same way a person would desire others to aid them in their moment of need. Therefore, this love must be shown through actions not just words. Even when a Muslim forbids evil and offers advice which contradicts the desire of others they should do so gently just like they would want others to advise them kindly.

As mentioned earlier, the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of eliminating all bad characteristics which contradict mutual love and care, such as envy. Envy is when a person desires to possess a specific blessing which is only obtainable when it is taken away from someone else. This attitude is a direct challenge to the distribution of blessings chosen by Allah, the Exalted. This is why it is a major sin and leads to the destruction of the envier's good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903. If a Muslim must



desire the lawful things others possess they should wish and supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, to grant them the same or similar thing without the other person losing the blessing. This type of jealousy is lawful and is praiseworthy in aspects of religion. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Muslims should only be jealous of a wealthy person who uses their wealth correctly. And be jealous of a knowledgeable person who uses their knowledge to benefit themselves and others.

A Muslim should not only love for others to obtain lawful worldly blessings but also for them to gain religious blessings in both worlds. In fact, when one wishes this for others it encourages them to strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This type of healthy competition is welcomed in Islam. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 26:

*“...So for this let the competitors compete.”*

This encouragement will also inspire a Muslim to assess themselves in order to find and eliminate any faults in their character. When these two elements combine meaning, striving in sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and purifying one's character, it leads to success in both worlds.

A Muslim must therefore not only claim to love for others what they desire for themselves verbally but show it through their actions. It is hoped that the one who is concerned for others in this way will receive the concern of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930.

## **Especially Chosen**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 144:

*"[Allah] said, "O Moses, I have chosen you over the people..."*

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 a Muslim can only draw close to Him through fulfilling their obligatory duties. And they can achieve the love of Allah, the Exalted, through voluntary righteous deeds.

This description splits the servants of Allah, the Exalted, into two categories. The first group draws near to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer, and in respect to people, such as the obligatory charity. This can be summed up by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

The second category of those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, are superior to the first group as they not only fulfil their obligatory duties

but strive in voluntary righteous deeds. This clearly shows that this is the only path to the proximity of Allah, the Exalted. Whoever takes a path other than this will not achieve this vital goal. This completely rejects the concept of obtaining sainthood without striving in obedience to Allah, the Exalted. The person who claims this is simply a liar. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body becomes pure. This leads to righteous deeds. So if a person does not perform righteous deeds, such as their obligatory duties, then their body is impure which means their spiritual heart is impure as well. This person can never reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, the greatest voluntary righteous deeds one can perform are those based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anyone who chooses to perform voluntary righteous deeds not based on his traditions has been fooled by the Devil as no path will take one close to Allah, the Exalted, except the path and actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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....”*

The pious Muslims who belong in the second higher group are also those who avoid unnecessary things of this material world. This attitude aids them in focusing their efforts on performing voluntary righteous deeds. It is this group who have perfected their faith by loving, hating, giving and

withholding all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds Allah, the Exalted, 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.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this Muslim's supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who

desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.

## Holding on Firmly

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 144:

*“[Allah] said, "O Moses, I have chosen you over the people with My messages and My words [to you]. So take what I have given you...”*

Similarly, the Holy Quran has been granted to mankind therefore they must strive to sincerely obey and follow it.

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. This 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.

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a Muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true Muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.



## Two Parts of Gratitude

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 144:

*"[Allah] said, "O Moses...be among the grateful.""*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though there is no doubt that the source of all blessings is none other than Allah, the Exalted, none the less showing gratitude to people is an important aspect of Islam. This is because Allah, the Exalted, sometimes uses a person as a means to help others such as one's parents. As the means has been created and used by Allah, the Exalted, being grateful to them is in fact being grateful to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims must show good character and always show appreciation for any aid or support they receive from others irrespective of its size. They should show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessing according to His commands as He is the source of the blessing and show gratitude to the person as they are the means which was created and chosen by Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should show gratitude verbally to people and practically by repaying their act of kindness according to their means even if it is only a

supplication on their behalf. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 216.

The person who does not show gratitude to people cannot show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore they will not be given an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

If a Muslim desires an increase in blessings they must fulfill both aspects of gratitude namely, to Allah, the Exalted, and to people.

## **Determination Leads to Strength**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 145:

*“And We wrote for him [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] on the tablets [something] of all things - instruction and explanation for all things, [saying], “Take them with determination...””*

When one adheres to the teachings of Islam it will strengthen their faith.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4168, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the strong believer is more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, than a weaker believer. This does not necessarily refer to physical strength which one uses to perform righteous deeds. But it also refers to knowledge and acting on it. When one acts on their knowledge it leads to certainty of faith. The one who possesses strong faith will fulfil their duties according to their knowledge and not blind imitation like the weak believer. A weak believer believes something based on hearsay like if they were told a person is inside their house whereas the strong believer believes and acts based on knowledge for example, if they saw the person inside their house through a window. The stronger one's faith the greater their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and

facing destiny with patience. This in turn increases their success in both worlds. 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...”*

## **Always Adhere to Guidance**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 148:

*“And the people of Moses made, after [his departure], from their ornaments a calf [to worship]...”*

This occurred after the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, temporarily left his people in order to converse with Allah, the Exalted. Similarly, Muslims must not abandon the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, after his departure from this world.

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.

## **Fear for Nation**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 148:

*“And the people of Moses made, after [his departure], from their ornaments a calf [to worship]...”*

This occurred after the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, temporarily left his people in order to converse with Allah, the Exalted. Similarly, Muslims must not abandon the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, after his departure from this world.

In reality, anything which distracts one from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is an object of worship.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that he did not fear poverty for the Muslim nation. Instead he feared that the world would become easy to obtain and plentiful for them. This would cause them to

compete for it which would lead to their destruction as this same competition destroyed the previous nations.

It is important to understand that this does not only apply to wealth. But this warning applies to all aspects of people's worldly desires which can be encompassed by the desire for fame, wealth, authority and the social aspects of one's life, such as family, friends and a career. Whenever one aims to fulfil their desires by pursuing these things, even if they are lawful, beyond their needs it will distract them from preparing for the hereafter. It will lead them to bad character such as being wasteful and extravagant and may even take them towards sins in order to obtain these things. Failing to obtain them may lead to impatience and other acts of defiance and disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious these desires have taken control over many Muslims as they would happily get up in the middle of the night in order to obtain these things such as wealth or go on a holiday but will fail to do so when advised to offer the voluntary night prayer or attend the morning obligatory prayer at the Mosque with congregation.

There is no harm in obtaining these things as long as they are lawful and required in order to fulfil a person's needs and the needs of their dependents. But when a person goes beyond this then they will become preoccupied with them at the loss of their hereafter as the more one pursues their desires the less they will strive in preparing for the hereafter. And therefore, the warning given in this Hadith will apply to them.



## **Love and Hate for Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verses 148-150:

*“And the people of Moses made, after [his departure], from their ornaments a calf [to worship]...And when Moses returned to his people, angry and grieved...”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the characteristics which perfect a Muslim's faith.

The first is to love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This includes desiring what is best for others in both worldly and religious matters. This must be practically shown through one's actions meaning, supporting others financially, emotionally and physically within one's means. Counting one's favors to others not only cancels the reward but also proves their lack of love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, as this person only loves gaining praise and other forms of compensation from people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

*“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury...”*

Any type of negative feelings towards others over worldly reasons, such as envy, contradicts loving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and must be avoided.

To sum up, this noble quality includes loving for others what one loves for themselves through actions not just words. This is an aspect of being a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is to hate for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This means one should dislike the things Allah, the Exalted, dislikes such as His disobedience. It is important to note, this does not mean one should hate others as people can sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted. Instead a Muslim should dislike the sin itself which is proven by them avoiding it and warning others against it also. Muslims should continue to advise others instead of breaking ties with them as this act of kindness may well cause them to sincerely repent. This includes not disliking things based on one's own feelings, such as an action, which is lawful. Finally the proof of one disliking for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is that when they show their dislike through their words and actions it will never be in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. Meaning, their dislike for something will never cause them to commit a sin as this would prove that their dislike for something is for their own sake.

## **The All Forgiving**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 155:

*“[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said]...and You are the best of forgivers.”*

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A Muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”*

A Muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one

who repents sincerely not the person who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Muslims should act on this blessed divine name by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

## Good in Both Worlds

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 156:

*“[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said]...And decree for us in this world [that which is] good and [also] in the Hereafter...”*

This supplication reminds Muslims that the material world is a bridge which connects one to the hereafter. It cannot be completely abandoned as it must be crossed in order to reach the other side safely. But it is important to note, this does not mean one is encouraged to indulge excessively in the unnecessary lawful aspects of the material world as good in this material world is not what society, fashion, culture or people define as good. But true good is what Islam defines as good. Namely, anything which is beneficial to one's hereafter. For example, wealth when used correctly, such as fulfilling one's necessities and the necessities of their dependents, is a good thing. But wealth used incorrectly such as being wasted or spent extravagantly is not good at all. Good health is a good thing when one uses it in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, but a bad thing when it is used to disobey Him. So one should remember that anything which is beneficial to one's hereafter is actually good even if society labels it as insignificant. This has been indicated in this supplication.

Good in the hereafter consists of being forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, and entering Paradise without entering Hell first. But one should support this verbal supplication practically by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Simply declaring with one's words and not supporting it through actions is only wishful thinking which has little or no real value.

## Fear and Hope

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 156:

*"...[Allah] said [to Prophet Musa, peace be upon him], "My punishment - I afflict with it whom I will, but My mercy encompasses all things..."*

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He acts and treats His servant according to their perception of Him. This means if a Muslim has good thoughts and expects good from Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will not disappoint them. Similarly, if a person harbours negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, such as believing they will not be forgiven then Allah, the Exalted, may act according to their belief.

It is important to note, there is a vast difference between true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which this Hadith refers to and wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is when one fails to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them. This is not true hope it is merely wishful thinking. This is like a farmer who fails to plant any seeds, fails to water their crop and still hopes to reap a large harvest. True hope is when one strives to obey Allah, the Exalted, and whenever they slip up they sincerely repent and then hope for the

mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. This is like a farmer who plants seeds, waters their crop, dedicates effort to keeping the crop healthy and then hopes for a large harvest. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has summarised this explanation in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Generally speaking, a Muslim should harbour more fear of Allah, the Exalted, during their life as it prevents sins which is superior to hope which inspires one to perform righteous deeds especially, the voluntary type. But during periods of illness and difficulty and especially at the time of death a Muslim should have nothing but hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, even if they have spent their life disobeying Him as this has specifically been commanded by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2877.



## Harming Yourself

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 160:

*“...And they [some of the people of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] wronged Us not, but they were [only] wronging themselves.”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2447, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that oppression will become a darkness on the Day of Judgment.

This is vital to avoid as those who find themselves plunged in darkness are unlikely to find their way to Paradise. Only those who will be provided a guiding light will be able to do this successfully.

Oppression can take many forms. The first type is when one fails to fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. Even though this has no effect on the infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, it will cause the person to become submerged into darkness in both worlds. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, whenever a person commits a sin a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. The

more they sin the more their heart will become encompassed by darkness. This will prevent them from accepting and following true guidance in this world which will ultimately lead to darkness in the next world. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

*“No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning.”*

The next type of oppression is when one oppresses themselves by not fulfilling the trust they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, in the form of their body and other worldly blessings they possess. The greatest of which is one's faith. This must be protected and strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

The final type of oppression is when one mistreats others. Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive these sins until the oppressor's victim forgives them first. As people are not so merciful this is unlikely to happen. Then justice will be established on Judgment Day where the oppressor's righteous deeds will be given to their victim and if necessary the victim's sins will be given to the oppressor. This may lead to the oppressor being hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. One should therefore treat others how they wish to be treated by people. A Muslim should avoid all forms of oppression if they desire a guiding light in this world and in the next.

Finally, it is important to understand that the prohibitions and commands of Allah, the Exalted, do not exist to make people's life harder. They only exist in order to benefit people in both this world and in the next even if these benefits are not apparent to people. For example, the negative effects of alcohol, which science has proven, was not always apparent such as its negative effect on the organs of the body. It only became unlawful in Islam to protect people from this and other harms. In addition, It is an aspect of faith to accept something without understanding its wisdoms. If all the wisdoms of the commands and prohibitions were made apparent then it would not allow Muslims to possess complete faith. Allah, the Exalted, does not benefit from these commands and prohibitions only people do.

## **Benefit Yourself**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 161:

*"[Allah, the Exalted, said to the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, and his nation]...We will increase the doers of good [in goodness and reward]."*

It is important for Muslims to understand that when they treat others kindly it in reality, benefits themselves and not others. This is because treating others kindly has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted, and fulfilling this important duty gains one reward.

In addition, when one is kind to others they will supplicate for them while they are alive which will benefit them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6929, that a supplication done for a person in secret is always answered.

In addition, the people will supplicate for them after they pass away which is definitely answered as it has been recorded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 10:

*“...saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith...”*

Finally, a person who treated others kindly will gain their intercession on the Day of Judgment, which is a day people will be desperate for the intercession of others. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7439.

But those who mistreat others even if they fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, will miss out on the benefits mentioned earlier. And on Judgment Day they will find that Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive them until their victim forgives them first. If they choose not to then the oppressor's good deeds will be given to their victim and if needed the victim's sins will be given to their oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Therefore, a Muslim should be kind to themselves by being kind to others as in reality they are only benefiting themselves in this world and the next. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 6:

*“And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself...”*

## Customary Practices

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 162:

*“But those who wronged [from the nation of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] among them changed [the words] to a statement other than that which had been said to them. So We sent upon them a punishment from the sky...”*

This can occur when one concentrates more on practicing on the customs and traditions of non-Muslims instead of acting on the teachings of Islam. The more Muslims do this the less they will follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is quite evident in this day and age as many Muslims have adopted the cultural practices of other nations which has caused them to become distant from the teachings of Islam. For example, one only needs to observe the modern Muslim wedding to observe how many non-Muslim cultural practices have been adopted by Muslims. What makes this worse is that many Muslims cannot differentiate between Islamic practices based on the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Because of this non-Muslims cannot differentiate between them either which has caused great problems for Islam. For example, honour killings is a cultural practice which has nothing to do with Islam yet because of the ignorance of Muslims and their habit of adopting non-Muslim cultural practices Islam is blamed every time an honour killing

occurs in society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, removed the social barriers in the form of casts and brotherhoods in order to unite people yet ignorant Muslims have resurrected them by adopting the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Simply put, the more cultural practices Muslims adopt the less they will act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.



## **Black Magic**

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 77:

*“Moses said, "Do you say [thus] about the truth when it has come to you? Is this magic? But magicians will not succeed.””*

The Holy Quran has connected practicing sorcery with unbelief. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 102:

*“...But they [i.e., the two angels] do not teach anyone unless they say, "We are a trial, so do not disbelieve [by practicing magic]...””*

Some commit this sin believing it is only forbidden when it is actually connected to disbelief. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, classified sorcery as one of the destructive sins meaning, if one does not sincerely repent it may well cause them to enter Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2766.

It is a deadly major sin as the one who practices it believes it can change the decree of Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, it can rival and challenge the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted, which is clear unbelief. Therefore, Muslims must avoid this deadly major sin at all costs.

## Following Others

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 78:

*“They said, “Have you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] come to us to turn us away from that upon which we found our fathers...””*

The elders of a family, especially parents, often use a statement which they believe indicates their right guidance namely, elders know best. To be honest this statement was true in the day of the righteous predecessors as the elders at that time used to strive in gaining and acting on beneficial knowledge. They put aside their own opinions and thinking and instead adopted the advice of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Because of their sincere efforts they were granted right guidance by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Therefore, this statement applied to them and the youngsters in those days benefited if they acted on the advice of these elders. But unfortunately

times have changed. In this day and age the majority of elders do not seek nor act on beneficial knowledge instead the vast majority act on their cultural practices which in most cases do not have a foundation in Islamic teachings. They flee from beneficial knowledge and are very content with these teachings based on made up cultural practices. Because of this ignorance elders are now sometimes right and sometimes wrong. Therefore, the statement elders know best no longer applies.

It is important to note this does not mean a Muslim should ignore or disrespect their elders as this completely contradicts the teachings of Islam. They should instead strive to gain correct beneficial knowledge, hear the advice of others, including their elders, and then make a choice which is indicated by Islam in all their matters even if it contradicts the opinions of others. A Muslim should not blindly follow their elders as this in most cases will lead them away from the teachings of Islam. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 116:

*“And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but misjudging.”*

This is possible to do while maintaining respect for others especially one's elders. If Muslims do this then perhaps a day will come when this statement will once again be true.

## Gaining Success

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verses 79-81:

*“And Pharaoh said, "Bring to me every learned magician." So when the magicians came, Moses said to them, "Throw down whatever you will throw." And when they had thrown, Moses said, "What you have brought is [only] magic. Indeed, Allah will expose its worthlessness...”*”

These verses discuss when the magicians of Pharaoh attempted to prove the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, wrong by using magic.

It is important for Muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a Muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and

His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A Muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”*

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice Muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

## The One Who Decrees

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 82:

*"[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said] And Allah will establish the truth by His words, even if the criminals dislike it."*

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who decrees harm and benefit. Allah, the Exalted, decrees harm to those who remain steadfast on persistent disobedience. But even in this harm there is much good such as wiping away one's sins before reaching Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6561.

A Muslim who understands this divine name will strive to receive benefits from Allah, the Exalted, and avoid harm through sincere obedience.

A Muslim must act on this divine name by keeping their harm away from others and only provide them with benefits according to their means. This in fact is the characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

## Fearing a Different Path

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 83:

*“But no one believed Moses, except [some] offspring [i.e., youths] among his people, for fear of Pharaoh and his establishment that they would persecute them...”*

It is important to understand that generally when one chooses a path which is different from the path of others, such as their relatives and friends, they will face criticism and resistance from them. In fact, the majority of criticism comes from a person's relatives. For example, when a Muslim decides to concentrate more on acting on the teachings of Islam and if it is something their family have not pursued themselves then they will face criticism from them. They will be labelled foolish and extreme by those who they believed would support them on their path. It is important for Muslims to remain steadfast on the lawful path they choose and trust in the help of Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in order to overcome these difficulties.

This is a common reaction from people for when a person chooses a different path in life from others it makes them feel as if their path is bad or evil and this is the reason the person has chosen a different path. Even



though the person does not believe this but only chooses a different path believing it is better for them yet they will still face criticism. It is the same reason all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were criticised by their people as they chose and passively invited others to a different better path.

To conclude, as long as one's path in life is lawful they should remain steadfast and not be deterred by the criticism of others. But this does not mean they should not try to improve their situation and character. It means they should not be deterred from pursuing their lawful choice according to the teachings of Islam.

## Pride

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 83:

*“...And indeed, Pharaoh was haughty within the land...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a person who possesses even an atom's worth of pride in their heart will not enter Paradise. He clarified that pride is when a person rejects the truth and looks down on others.

No amount of good deeds will benefit someone who possesses pride. This is quite obvious when one observes the Devil and how his countless years of worship did not benefit him when he became proud. In fact, the following verse clearly connects pride with disbelief so a Muslim must avoid this evil characteristic at all costs. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

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

The proud is the one who rejects the truth when it is presented to them simply because it did not come from them and as it challenges their desires and mentality. The proud person also believes they are superior to others even though they are unaware of their own ultimate end and the ultimate end of others. This is plain ignorance. In reality, it is foolish to be proud of anything seeing as Allah, the Exalted, created and granted everything a person owns. Even the righteous deeds one performs are only due to the inspiration, knowledge and strength granted by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, being proud of something which does not innately belong to them is plain foolishness. This is just like a person who becomes proud over a mansion they do not even own or live in.

This is the reason why pride belongs to Allah, the Exalted, as He alone is the Creator and innate Owner of all things. The one who challenges Allah, the Exalted, in pride will be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4090.

A Muslim should instead follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and adopt humility. The humble truly recognise that all the good they possess and all the evil they are protected from comes from no one except Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, humility is more fitting for a person than pride. A person should not be fooled into believing humility leads to disgrace as no one has been more honoured than the humble servants of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed an increase in status for the one who adopts humility for the

sake of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029.

## **Inward and Outward Belief**

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 84:

*“And Moses said, “O my people, if you have believed in Allah...if you should be Muslims [i.e., submitting to Him].””*

Believing in Allah, the Exalted, could be referring to inward belief and submitting to Him indicates practically and sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. Both these are discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, where 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.

## True Reliance

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 84:

*“And Moses said, “O my people, if you have believed in Allah, then rely upon Him, if you should be Muslims [i.e., submitting to Him].””*

This verse indicates that only a person who internally believes in Allah, the Exalted, and then practically sincerely obeys Him will be able to correctly trust and rely on Him.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2344, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if people truly trusted Allah, the Exalted, He would provide for them just like He provides for birds. They leave their nests hungry in the morning and return in the evening satisfied.

Truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is something which is felt in the heart but is proven through the limbs meaning, when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

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

The aspect of trust which is internal involves firmly believing that only Allah, the Exalted, can provide one with beneficial things and protect them from harmful things both in worldly and religious matters. A Muslim understands that no one except Allah, the Exalted, can give, withhold, harm or benefit someone.

It is important to note, that truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, does not mean one should abandon using the means which Allah, the Exalted, has provided, such as medicine. As the main Hadith under discussion clearly mentions that the birds leave their nests actively searching for provision. When one uses the strength and means provided by Allah, the Exalted, according to the teachings of Islam they are undoubtedly obeying Him. This is in fact, the outward element of trusting in Allah, the Exalted. This has been made clear in many verses and Hadiths. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 71:

*“O you who have believed, take your precaution...”*



In reality, the outward activity is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and trusting Allah, the Exalted, inwardly is the inward state of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One should not abandon the outward tradition even if they possess the inward state of trust.

Actions and using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting Him. In this respect, actions can be split into three categories. The first are those actions of obedience which Allah, the Exalted, commands Muslims to do so that they can avoid Hell and obtain Paradise. Abandoning these while claiming trust that Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them is simply wishful thinking and is therefore blameworthy.

The second type of actions are those means which Allah, the Exalted, has created in this world in order for people to live in it safely, such as eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty and wearing warm clothes in cold weather. A person who abandons these and causes harm to themselves is blameworthy. However, there are some people who have been provided special strength by Allah, the Exalted, so that they can avoid these means without harming themselves. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used to fast for days on end uninterrupted but forbade others from doing the same as Allah, the Exalted, provided for him directly without the need for food. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1922. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed for the fourth rightly guided Caliph Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, so that he would not feel excess cold or heat. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 117. Therefore, if a person turns away from these means but is provided with the strength to endure without failing in

their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people then it is acceptable otherwise it is blameworthy.

The third type of actions in respect to trusting in Allah, the Exalted, are those things which have been set as a customary practice which Allah, the Exalted, sometimes breaks for certain people. An example of this are the people who become cured of illnesses without the need of medicine. This is quite common especially in poorer countries where medicine is difficult to obtain. This is linked to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2144, which advises that no person will die until they utilize every ounce of their provision which was allocated to them, which according to another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, was over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. So the one who truly realises this Hadith might not seek provision actively knowing that what was allocated to them so long ago cannot miss them. So for this person the customary means of obtaining provision such as obtaining it through a job is broken by Allah, the Exalted. This is a high and rare rank. Only the one who can behave in such a manner without complaining or panicking nor expecting things from people is free of blame if they choose this path. It is important to note, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692, that it is a sin for a person to fail in providing for their dependents even though they may be on this high rank.

Having real trust in Allah, the Exalted, leads to being content with destiny. Meaning, whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them they accept without complaint and without desiring things to change as they firmly trust that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the 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.”*

To conclude, it is best to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by using the lawful means one has been granted firmly believing they are from Allah, the Exalted, and trust internally that only what Allah, the Exalted, decides will occur, which is undoubtedly the best choice for each person whether they observe this or not.

## Make Things Easy

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 85:

*“So they [the followers of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said, “...Our Lord, make us not [objects of] trial for the wrongdoing people.””*

Even though this supplication mentions wrongdoing people yet generally speaking, a Muslim should always strive not to become a test and trial for others. One way of achieving this is by being lenient when they demand others to fulfill their rights.

In this day and age due to ignorance it has become more difficult to fulfill the rights of people, such as one's parents. Even though a Muslim has no excuse but to strive to fulfill them it is important for Muslims to be merciful with each other. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6655, Allah, the Exalted, shows mercy to those who are merciful to others.

One aspect of this mercy is for a Muslim not to demand their full rights from others. Instead, they should use the means such as their physical or

financial strength to help themselves and make things easy for others. In some cases, when a Muslim demands their full rights from others and they fail to fulfil them it may lead to their punishment. In order to be merciful to others they should therefore only demand their rights in some cases. This does not mean a Muslim should not strive to fulfil the rights of others but it means they should try to overlook and excuse the people they have rights over. For example, a parent can excuse their adult child from a particular house chore and do it themselves if they possess the means to do so without troubling themselves, especially if their child returns home from work exhausted. This leniency and mercy will not only cause Allah, the Exalted, to be more merciful to them but it will also increase the love and respect people have for them. The one who always demands their full rights is not a sinner but they will lose out on this reward and outcome if they behave in this manner.

Muslims should make things easy for others and hope Allah, the Exalted, will make things easy for them in this world and in the next.

## **A Pious Family**

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 87:

*“And We inspired to Moses and his brother, “Settle your people in Egypt in houses and make your houses [facing the] qiblah [places of worship]...””*

This verse discusses a person’s homelife which includes their family. This verse is connected to chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 74:

*“And those who say, “Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes...””*

This verse indicates the importance of marrying according to the teachings of Islam. This means the true servants of the Most Merciful follow the advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Muslim, number 3635, when choosing who to marry. This Hadith advises that a person is married for their beauty, lineage, wealth or for their piety. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to marry someone who possesses piety.

It is important to understand that the first three things mentioned in this Hadith are very transient and imperfect. They may give someone temporary happiness but ultimately these things will become a burden for them as they are linked to the material world and not to the thing which grants ultimate and permanent success namely, faith. One only needs to observe the rich and famous in order to understand that wealth does not bring happiness. In fact, the rich are the most unsatisfied and unhappy people on Earth. Marrying someone for the sake of their lineage is foolish as it does not guarantee the person will make a good spouse. In fact, if the marriage does not work out it destroys the family bond the two families possessed before the marriage. Marrying only for the sake of beauty meaning, love is not wise as this is a fickle emotion which changes with the passing of time and with one's mood. How many couples supposedly drowned in love ended up hating each other?

But it is important to note that this Hadith does not mean one should find a spouse who is poor as it is important to get married to someone who can financially support a family. Neither does it mean one should not be attracted to their spouse as this is an important aspect of a healthy marriage. But this Hadith means that these things should not be the main or ultimate reason someone gets married.

The main and ultimate quality a Muslim should look for in a spouse is piety. This is when a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience. Put simply, the one who fears Allah, the Exalted, will treat their spouse well in both times of happiness and difficulty. On the other hand, those who are irreligious will mistreat their spouse whenever they are upset. This is one of the main

reasons why domestic violence has increased amongst Muslims in recent years.

The true servants of the Most Merciful act on the advice given in this Hadith and through it they fulfil an aspect which helps them perfect their faith. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2521. Only through this behaviour can a Muslim achieve the coolness of their eyes through their spouse which is indicated in this verse.

In order to achieve the second thing mentioned in this verse namely, a pious child, a parent must educate their child to adopt piety firstly by leading by example and giving their child a practical demonstration of piety. Secondly, they should teach them from a young age the different aspects of piety and noble character taught in the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This can be summed up into three things namely, to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, to refrain from His prohibitions and to face destiny with patience. Only when a parent takes these steps can they fulfil the supplication in this verse. Only then will they child benefit them in this world and the next. Neglecting this duty will only cause one's child to become a source of distress for them in both worlds.



## **Ease and Glad Tidings**

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 87:

*“And We inspired to Moses and his brother, “...give good tidings to the believers.””*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6125, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to make things easy for others instead of making things difficult. And to give glad tidings to others and not scare them.

A Muslim should always make things easy firstly for themselves by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they can fulfill their obligatory duties, act on the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents. This will provide them with plenty of time to enjoy lawful things without being wasteful or extravagant. A Muslim should act according to their strength in respect to voluntary righteous deeds and not overburden themselves as this is disliked in Islam. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465. A balanced approach is always best.

In addition, Muslims should make things easy for others especially, in religious matters so that people do not grow averse to Islam believing it is a burdensome religion when it in fact is a simple and easy religion. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287. This is important to teach others, especially children. If children wrongfully believe Islam is a difficult religion they will turn away from it when they get older. Children should be taught that Islam has some obligations which do not take much time to fulfill and leaves plenty of time for them to have fun in good ways.

But it is important to note, making things easy for oneself or others in religious matters does not mean a Muslim should be lazy and teach others to be lazy as the minimum obligations must be fulfilled at all times unless one is exempt by Islam. The one who acts lazily is not obeying Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires.

Another aspect of making things easy for others includes a Muslim not demanding their full rights from others. Instead, they should use the means, such as their physical or financial strength, to help themselves and make things easy for others. In some cases, failing to fulfill the rights of others can lead to punishment. In order to make things easy for others a Muslim should therefore only demand their rights in some cases. This does not mean a Muslim should not strive to fulfill the rights of others but it means they should try to overlook and excuse the people they have rights over. For example, a parent can excuse their adult child from a particular house chore and do it themselves if they possess the means to do so without trouble especially if their child returns home from work exhausted. This leniency and mercy will not only cause Allah, the Exalted, to be more merciful to them but it will also increase the love and respect people have for them. The one who always demands their full rights is not a sinner but they will lose out on this reward and outcome if they behave in this manner.

Muslims should make things easy for others and hope Allah, the Exalted, will make things easy for them in this world and in the next. But those who make things difficult for others may find that Allah, the Exalted, makes things difficult for them in both worlds.

A Muslim must remind themselves and others of the countless blessings of Allah, the Exalted, and the great reward He bestows on Muslims in this world and in the next on those who obey Him by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This approach, in most cases, is more effective in encouraging people towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Only in some cases when someone is indulging in wishful thinking and disobeying Allah, the Exalted, while expecting they will succeed should a Muslim warn them of the consequences of their actions thereby, inspiring the fear of Allah, the Exalted, in them.

A balance is best whereby one uses hope in Allah, the Exalted, to encourage His obedience and fear of Him in order to prevent sins. And whenever one feels imbalanced or observes others who have become imbalanced a Muslim should act appropriately in order to adjust themselves and others back to the correct middle path.

## **Means to Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 88:

*“And Moses said, "Our Lord, indeed You have given Pharaoh and his establishment splendor and wealth in the worldly life..."”*

Every worldly blessing a Muslim possesses is only a means which should aid them in reaching the hereafter safely. It is not an end in itself. For example, wealth is a means one should use in order to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, fulfilling their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. It is not an end or an ultimate goal in itself.

This not only aids a Muslim in maintaining their focus on the hereafter but it also aids them whenever they lose worldly blessings. When a Muslim treats each worldly blessing, such as a child, as a means to please Allah, the Exalted, and reach the hereafter safely then losing it will not have such a detrimental impact on them. They may become sad, which is an acceptable emotion, but they will not become grieved which leads to impatience and other mental problems, such as depression. This is because they firmly believe the worldly blessing they possessed was only a means so losing it does not cause a loss in the ultimate goal namely, Paradise, the loss of which is disastrous. Therefore, still possessing and concentrating on the ultimate goal will prevent them from becoming grieved.

In addition, they will understand that just like the thing they lost was only a means they firmly believe they will be provided with another means to reach and fulfil their ultimate goal by Allah, the Exalted. This will also prevent them from grieving. Whereas, the one who believes their worldly blessing is the end instead of a means will experience severe grief when losing it as their whole purpose and objective has been lost. This grief will lead to depression and other mental issues.

To conclude, Muslims should treat each blessing they possess as a means to reach the hereafter safely not as an end in itself. This is how one can possess things without being possessed by them. This is how they can keep worldly things in their hands and not in their hearts.

## **Supplicating Against Pharaoh**

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verses 88-89:

*“And Moses said...“Our Lord, obliterate their wealth and harden their hearts so that they will not believe until they see the painful punishment. [Allah] said, “Your supplication has been answered.” So remain on a right course and follow not the way of those who do not know.””*

This event reminds Muslims that even though wealth and authority are not prohibited in Islam but when they are not obtained or used correctly they always misguide their possessor and others. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, that the desire of obtaining wealth and authority is more destructive to a person's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which have been set free on a herd of sheep. The minimum limits of seeking wealth and authority is that they should never prevent one from fulfilling their obligatory duties towards Allah, the Exalted, or the creation and they should not encourage them to commit sins, such as oppression. As acquiring these two things beyond one's necessities is extremely difficult to achieve within these limits it is therefore safer for a Muslim to only seek what fulfils their needs and the needs of their dependents. The one who over indulges in these two things and crosses the limits should be aware of losing these blessings and soiling their spiritual heart so that it becomes hardened. This has been warned in this great event. This spiritual heart will not be safe on the Day of Resurrection as it has become blinded from true guidance by the darkness which has

encompassed it. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244.

In addition, the answer of this supplication from Allah, the Exalted, teaches Muslims that they must adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. One should not merely supplicate without this obedience as this contradicts the etiquettes and conditions of supplicating.

Finally, the response from Allah, the Exalted, warns Muslims not to supplicate and then expect an immediate response as Allah, the Exalted, responds when it is best for His servant. The one who gives up supplicating because of this attitude will not have their supplication fulfilled. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3387.

## **Wishful Thinking**

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verses 90-91:

*“And We took the Children of Israel [the nation of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] across the sea, and Pharaoh and his soldiers pursued them in tyranny and enmity until, when drowning overtook him, he said, "I believe that there is no deity except that in whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of the Muslims." Now? And you had disobeyed [Him] before and were of the corrupters?”*

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.

## Learning from Observation

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verses 90-92:

*“And We took the Children of Israel [the nation of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] across the sea, and Pharaoh and his soldiers pursued them in tyranny and enmity until, when drowning overtook him, he said, “I believe that there is no deity except that in whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of the Muslims.” Now? And you had disobeyed [Him] before and were of the corrupters?” So today We will save you in body [preserve your corpse] that you may be to those who succeed you a sign.”*

It is important for a Muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a Muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A Muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

## Real Love

The next discussion is based on chapter 11 Hud, verses 96-97:

*“And We did certainly send Moses with Our signs and a clear authority. To Pharaoh and his establishment, but they followed the command of Pharaoh, and the command of Pharaoh was not [at all] discerning.”*

Muslims should note that a major sign of true love is when one directs their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is because obedience leads to success and safety in both this world and in the hereafter. A person who does not desire safety and success for a person can never truly love them irrespective of what they claim or how they treat the other person. The same way a person becomes happy when their beloved obtains worldly success, like a job, they will also desire their beloved to obtain success in the hereafter. If a person does not care about another obtaining safety and success especially, in the next world then they do not love them.

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own

selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

Therefore, a Muslim should assess whether those in their life direct them towards Allah, the Exalted, or not. If they do then it is a clear sign of their love for them. If they do not then it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

*“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”*

## From Darkness to Light

The next discussion is based on chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 5:

*“And We certainly sent Moses with Our signs, [saying], “Bring out your people from darkness’s into the light...””*

Darkness is often connected to times of difficulty especially, emotional stress such as grief, and light is often connected to peace of mind and body.

It is important for Muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely obeying and following the greatest signs of Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, 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.

## Being Grateful

The next discussion is based on chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

*“[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said] And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'”*

A Muslim must ensure they fulfill all three aspects of gratitude so that they avoid becoming a denier of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who is ungrateful in reality, scorns the One who granted them the blessings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

*“...And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.”*

The three aspects of gratitude are to internally acknowledge Allah, the Exalted, as the sole Creator and Provider of all blessings. An aspect of this is to correct one's intention so that they only perform actions to please Allah, the Exalted. The next aspect is to praise Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue. And the final and highest aspect is to practically show gratitude through one's actions by using each blessing as prescribed by Islam in order to please 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]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'”*

As true gratitude leads to an increase in blessings Muslims should fear that showing ingratitude may cause the blessings they possess to either be taken away from them or for their blessings to be used against them by becoming a burden and a curse for them in both worlds. It is important to note, even if a Muslim becomes truly grateful they will still face tests and difficulties as they are guaranteed. But if they behave in the correct way they will be guided through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and body in this world and a great reward in the hereafter.

## The Sincere

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 51:

*“And mention in the Book, Moses. Indeed, he was sincere...”*

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.

## Drawing Near

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verses 51-52:

*“And mention in the Book, Moses...And We...brought him near...”*

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 a Muslim can only draw close to Him through fulfilling their obligatory duties. And they can achieve the love of Allah, the Exalted, through voluntary righteous deeds.

This description splits the servants of Allah, the Exalted, into two categories. The first group draws near to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer, and in respect to people, such as the obligatory charity. This can be summed up by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

The second category of those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, are superior to the first group as they not only fulfil their obligatory duties but strive in voluntary righteous deeds. This clearly shows that this is the only path to the proximity of Allah, the Exalted. Whoever takes a path other than this will not achieve this vital goal. This

completely rejects the concept of obtaining sainthood without striving in obedience to Allah, the Exalted. The person who claims this is simply a liar. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body becomes pure. This leads to righteous deeds. So if a person does not perform righteous deeds, such as their obligatory duties, then their body is impure which means their spiritual heart is impure as well. This person can never reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, the greatest voluntary righteous deeds one can perform are those based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anyone who chooses to perform voluntary righteous deeds not based on his traditions has been fooled by the Devil as no path will take one close to Allah, the Exalted, except the path and actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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....”*

The pious Muslims who belong in the second higher group are also those who avoid unnecessary things of this material world. This attitude aids them in focusing their efforts on performing voluntary righteous deeds. It is this group who have perfected their faith by loving, hating, giving and withholding all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds Allah, the Exalted, 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.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this Muslim's supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.

## Listening Carefully

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verses 11-13:

*“And when he came to it, he was called, “O Moses...And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed [to you].””*

Even though the amount of Islamic scholars, lecturers and Islamic educational material has increased over time yet, the strength of Muslims has only decreased. There are many factors for this. One of the main reasons is that the intention of the listeners is not correct. They attend lectures not for sake of Allah, the Exalted, and changing for the better instead many only attend lectures searching for a spiritual high just like a music concert. They seek entertainment not reformation. They please themselves by claiming they are working hard in order to act on Islamic teachings by attending many events and gatherings yet, because of their attitude they do not change for the better by acting on the lessons they have heard. They believe merely listening is good enough to please Allah, the Exalted, and to succeed. It is why some attend lectures for decades yet do not change at all for the better.



## Gaining Paradise

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verses 11-14:

*“And when he came to it, he was called, “O Moses...Indeed, I am Allah. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me...””*

There are many Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which advise mankind that whoever testifies that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted, will be saved from the fire of Hell. One such example is found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128.

The meaning of these Hadiths is that whoever dies while believing in this testimony will either enter Paradise and escape Hell or they will enter Hell to the extent of their sins and then eventually be allowed into Paradise where they will dwell forever. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7510.

It is important to note, that those who desire to enter Paradise without entering Hell first must not only declare their belief in Islam verbally but they must also fulfil its conditions and obligations. The testimony of faith is undoubtedly the key to Paradise but a key needs teeth in order to

unlock a specific door. The teeth of the key to Paradise are its obligations and duties. Without them meaning, the key without its teeth, will not open the door to Paradise. This is proven through many Hadiths which indicate entry into Paradise requires one to fulfil the conditions and duties of Islam. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1397, indicates that the testimony must be supported by actions in the form of the pillars of Islam, such as establishing the obligatory prayers.

The first part of the testimony namely, there is none worthy of worship save Allah, the Exalted, means that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who must be obeyed and never disobeyed. When one accepts Allah, the Exalted, as their God they must not obey anything which leads to His disobedience as Allah, the Exalted, alone is their Master and they are only His slaves. But the moment one obeys anything which leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they have corrupted their belief in His Oneness which has been indicated in chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

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

The Holy Quran has warned Muslims that whoever commits sins is in reality worshipping the Devil as they have obeyed him over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 36 Yaseen, verse 60:

*“Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam, that you not worship Satan - [for] indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”*

The Muslims who reject their desires, the desires of others and the commands of the Devil and instead only obey Allah, the Exalted, have truly taken Allah, the Exalted, as their God. These Muslims have been granted the protection of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These Muslims have practically actualised the testimony of Islam as they supported their verbal and internal claim with sincere actions according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When one acts according to his traditions they have fulfilled the second aspect of the testimony namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted. These Muslims are the ones referred to in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128. It advises they will be saved from the Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted.

The person who declares Islam with the tongue and internally accepts it is undoubtedly a Muslim but their true sincere belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, is diminished according to their sins.

An aspect of truly acting on the testimony is sincerely loving Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has indicated this in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. It advises that this is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is when one loves what Allah, the Exalted, loves and hates what He hates. As this was the characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2333, Muslims have been commanded to follow him. 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...”*

It is clear from Islamic teachings that loving what Allah, the Exalted, hates and disliking what Allah, the Exalted, loves is a clear indication of a person following their own desires and obeying them over Allah, the Exalted. This attitude reduces one's belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. The following verse makes it clear that adopting this mentality is a deviation from true belief in the testimony of Islam. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 24:

*“Say, [O Muhammad], “If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.””*

The one who worships Allah, the Exalted, according to their own desires worships Him on the edge. Meaning, when they face times of ease they become pleased but when they encounter difficulties they turn away from His obedience in anger. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

*“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his*

*face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”*

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, informs Muslims how to correctly believe and act on the testimony of faith, which prevents one being harmed by the fire of Hell in the next world. This is to first complete the obligatory duties correctly while fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes. Then one must add to this by performing voluntary righteous deeds, the best of which are the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the love of Allah, the Exalted, and causes Allah, the Exalted, to empower every organ of their body so that they only obey Him. This true and sincere obedience is the fulfilment of the testimony of faith. This is the sound heart which contains only the love of Allah, the Exalted, and is free of worldly desires and the love of the material world. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

*“The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart.”*

It is important to note, this does not mean a Muslim becomes free from committing sins but it means they sincerely repent from them whenever they are rarely committed.

To conclude, it is vital for Muslims to not only declare the testimony of Islam internally and verbally but they must also show it in their actions as

this is the only way to achieve true success in this world and completely escape punishment in the next world also.

## **The Hour**

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verses 11-15:

*“And when he came to it, he was called, “O Moses...Indeed, the Hour is coming...””*

The trumpet blast will lead to the death of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7381. The important thing to learn is that this is a call which no one can or will reject responding to. It will lead to the resurrection and final judgment. Therefore, Muslims should respond to the call of Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through sincere obedience by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verse 24:

*“O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life...”*

Whoever responds to this call in this world will find the final call easy to endure and respond to. Whereas, the one who lives heedless to the call of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will not find peace in it and they will be

forced to answer the call of the trumpet which will be a great burden for them to endure and respond to. A person can only ignore the call of Allah, the Exalted, for so long as the final call will occur, sooner or later, and no one will be able to avoid or ignore it. If this is inevitable it makes sense that one respond to it now, today, instead of living in heedlessness. If one hears the trumpet blast while heedless no action or regret will benefit them and what comes after for this person will be even more terrifying.



## **Beware of Distractions**

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verses 11-16:

*“And when he came to it, he was called, "O Moses...Indeed, the Hour is coming...So do not let one avert you from it who does not believe in it and follows his desire, for you [then] would perish.””*

There are countless examples in the world of how a person inspired their friend to take the wrong path in life which caused them serious trouble, such as prison. One should not only be cautious of people who possess bad characteristics as they will influence their friends in a negative way which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. But a Muslim should also be cautious over the people who seem to possess genuine love for them especially those who do not possess real knowledge. This is because the one who does not possess real knowledge will sometimes advise their loved ones incorrectly believing they have fulfilled and shown their love to their companion. For example, a wife may advise her tired husband to offer his obligatory prayer at home instead of at the Mosque with congregation. Even though according to some scholars it is permissible to offer one's obligatory prayer at home yet, this advice will only take one away from one of the greatest traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn will only take them further away from Allah, the Exalted. This wife may believe she has behaved in a loving way even though she has not. This is why gaining useful knowledge is extremely important and a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. This is because some things may seem difficult outwardly yet many blessings are contained within them. And

many things may seem easy and even lawful yet they only take one away from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a Muslim should be cautious and remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and not get fooled by the advice a loved one gives. They should not assume the advice will benefit them just because it comes from a beloved companion.

## Being Content

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 25:

*“[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] said, "My Lord, expand [i.e., relax] for me my breast.”*

An aspect of this is obtaining contentment in this world. 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.

## Gaining Ease

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 26:

*“[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said] And ease for me my task.”*

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6833, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the more one obeys Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience the greater the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, they will receive. In each case, a Muslim's minimal effort will lead to receiving a greater mercy. This mercy will ensure they are rightly guided through every situation they face so that they overcome them in order to obtain peace of mind, body and true lasting success in both worlds. But the one who holds back from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not obtain this mercy and they therefore will not obtain right guidance during their life. Instead they will encounter one difficulty after another not knowing how to respond in each case.

## Salvation

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 27:

*“[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said] And untie the knot from my tongue.”*

This can include only using one’s speech in beneficial ways. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2501, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that whoever is silent is saved.

This means the one who is silent from vain or evil speech and only speaks good words will be saved by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This is important to understand as the main reason people will enter Hell is because of their speech. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. In fact, it only takes a single evil word to cause a person to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day which has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

Speech can be of three types. The first is evil speech which should be avoided at all costs. The second is vain speech which only causes one to waste time which will lead to a great regret on Judgment Day. In addition, the first step of sinful speech is often vain speech. So it is safer

to avoid this type of speech. The final type is good speech which should always be adopted. Based on these aspects two thirds of speech should be removed from one's life.

In addition, the one who speaks too much will only reflect on their actions and the hereafter a little as this requires silence. This will prevent one from assessing their deeds which inspires one to perform more righteous deeds and sincerely repent from their sins. This person will then be prevented from changing for the better.

Finally, those who speak too much often discuss worldly things and things which are entertaining and fun. This will cause them to adopt a mentality whereby they dislike discussing or listening to serious issues like death and the hereafter. This will prevent them from preparing adequately for the hereafter which will lead to a great regret and a potential punishment.

All of this can be avoided if one simply remains silent from sinful and vain speech and instead only speaks good words. Therefore, the one who is silent in this way will be saved from trouble in this world and from punishment in the next world.

## Love of the Creator and the Creation

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 39:

*“...And I blessed you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] with lovability from Me...”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4102, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised how to obtain the love of Allah, the Exalted, and the love of people.

The love of Allah, the Exalted, is obtained when one avoids the excess of this material world which are beyond their needs. Meaning, a Muslim should strive in this world in order to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. And they should strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anything from the material world which aids one in these things is not in reality a worldly thing. Therefore, avoiding them is not required. But one must avoid those things which either hinder or prevent them from fulfilling these duties. This is how a Muslim can keep the world in their hand and not in their heart. This is how a Muslim obtains the love of Allah, the Exalted, as this attitude causes them to strive in His obedience which attracts the love of Allah, the



Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

Finally, a Muslim can obtain the love of people by avoiding and desiring their worldly possessions. In reality, a person only behaves negatively towards others when they feel others actively desire their possessions or when others actively compete for the worldly things they themselves desire. Meaning, the fear of losing what one possesses and losing out on the things which they desire through competition with others can lead to negative feelings towards others. If a Muslim instead occupies themselves with acting on the first part of this Hadith it will prevent them from competing for the excess worldly things others desire as the vast majority of these desires are for unnecessary worldly things. And if a Muslim keeps their harm away from the self and possessions of others which according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, is the sign of a true believer, then they will gain the love of people also.

## The Divine Gaze

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 39:

*“...that you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] would be brought up under My eye...”*

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of Ihsan, which can be translated to mean excellence. This excellence refers to one's conduct and behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Acting with excellence has been mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as chapter 10 Yunus, verse 26:

*“For them who have done excellent is the best [reward] - and extra...”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has explained this verse in Hadiths found in Sahih Muslim, numbers 449 and 450. The word extra in this verse refers to when the inhabitants of Paradise will be blessed with the divine vision of Allah, the Exalted. This reward befits the Muslim who acts with excellence. As excellence means to lead one's life as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted, observing their outer and inner being at all times. A person who can observe a powerful authority watching them will never misbehave out of awe of them. In fact,

the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised someone to always behave as if they were constantly being observed by a righteous man they respected. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, number 5539.

Whoever acts in this manner will very rarely commit sins and always hasten towards good deeds. This attitude creates the fear of Allah, the Exalted, and acts as a shield from the fire of trials in this world and the fire of Hell in the hereafter. This vigilance will ensure one not only fulfills all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, but it also encourages them to fulfill their responsibilities towards the creation. The peak of which is to sincerely treat others with kindness. This person will fulfill the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 251, which advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This level of excellence ensures one acts with the right intention, which is the foundation of faith according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Success is guaranteed for the one who performs good deeds and demonstrates good behavior with the right intention namely, to please Allah, the Exalted. The more excellent a person acts the stronger their faith becomes until they become a Muslim who is far from heedlessness and is always struggling to beautify their hereafter and worldly life according to the teachings of Islam.

It is feared that the opposite of this reward will be given to those who turned away from Allah, the Exalted. As they lived without fearing the all-encompassing gaze of Allah, the Exalted, they will be veiled from seeing Him in the hereafter. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 15:

*“No! Indeed, from their Lord, that Day, they will be partitioned.”*

Those who fail to reach the level of acting as if they witness Allah, the Exalted, must act on the second part of the advice given in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning. This person should sincerely believe that Allah, the Exalted, is constantly observing them. Even though this state is lower in rank than the one who acts as if they observe Allah, the Exalted, none the less, it is a great way of adopting true fear of Allah, the Exalted. As mentioned earlier this attitude will prevent one from committing sins and encourage them towards good deeds. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in Imam Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, number 7935, the one who strives to adopt this mentality will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

The divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, is mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 4:

*“...He is with you wherever you are. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised to adopt the true awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, in many Hadiths. For example, in one divine Hadith found in

Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He is with whoever remembers Him. This is the reason why it has been reported in Hilyat Al Awliya, volume 1, pages 84 and 85, about the Commander of the Faithful, Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, that he shied away from the glitter and pomp of the material world and only found solace in the lonely night. Meaning, he sought the companionship of Allah, the Exalted, rather than the companionship of people.

Adopting the awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, not only prevents sins and encourages good deeds but it also prevents loneliness and depression. A person is very rarely affected by mental health issues when they are constantly surrounded by a person who loves them and aids them. No one loves the creation more than Allah, the Exalted, and there is no doubt that He is the source of all aid. Therefore, acting with excellence benefits one's faith, actions, emotional state and the wider society.

A Muslim must avoid becoming like those who treat Allah, the Exalted, as the most insignificant of those who observe them. This is a serious spiritual illness which leads to all types of sins and evil behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

## **Purpose of Mankind**

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 41:

*“And I produced you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] for Myself.”*

The Holy Quran clearly declared the purpose of mankind in chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

*“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”*

Before one can worship Allah, the Exalted, they must first recognise Him as it is not possible to obey someone without knowledge. In addition, people must first learn how to worship Allah, the Exalted, before they can fulfil this task. Therefore, worship is followed by knowledge. This is why in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared seeking useful knowledge a duty on all Muslims. Without knowledge one will never be able to worship Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Few good deeds performed with knowledge are far superior to many good deeds performed incorrectly because of ignorance.

As Allah, the Exalted, is the One who created mankind no one has the right to be served and worshipped except Him. If an employer easily dismisses their employee for abandoning the duty they have been hired for, how can it be correct to abandon serving and worshipping Allah, the Exalted, when He alone created and sustains the creation? All of mankind have been granted free will and the ability to obey and worship Allah, the Exalted. So each person must decide whether they desire to fulfil their purpose of creation thereby receiving eternal reward or reject it and face punishment in both worlds. The same way a device, such as a mobile phone, which does not fulfil its primary purpose is discarded people may well be discarded on the Day of Judgement into Hell for failing to fulfil their primary purpose of existence.

It is important to note, that worship refers to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This 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 obedience must encompass every part of one's life and body, such as their tongue. It includes a person's duty towards Allah, the Exalted, such as offering the prayer and treating the creation with kindness.

Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will be given the best rewards while those who disobey Him will receive the worst punishment in this world and the next. In a divine Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2466, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, narrates from Allah, the Exalted, who declares that if one busies themselves in worshipping Him, through sincere obedience, He will fill their heart with richness and remove their poverty. But if they turn away from His worship and obedience Allah, the Exalted, will fill their life with problems and not remove their poverty.

It is important to note, that Allah, the Exalted, does not need the creation in anyway whatsoever. As clearly mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6572, people only benefit themselves with their good deeds as it raises their ranks. And they only harm themselves with their sins as they will be held accountable for them. The infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, does not change at all irrespective of if the entire creation worshipped Him or not. Allah, the Exalted, is the sole Creator and sole Provider. It is people who are completely and utterly in need of Him. Whoever understands this and sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the purpose of their creation and will therefore be given an eternal reward.



## **True Remembrance**

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 42:

*“Go, you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him]...and do not slacken in My remembrance.”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6407, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the difference between the person who remembers Allah, the Exalted, and the one who does not is like a living person compared to a dead person.

It is important for Muslims who desire to create a strong connection with Allah, the Exalted, so that they can overcome all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter successfully to remember Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible. Put simply, the more they remember Him the more they will achieve this vital goal.

This is achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The second is by remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue. But the highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with

Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This is achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This requires one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds.

Those who remain on the first two levels will receive reward depending on their intention but they are unlikely to increase the strength of their faith and piety unless they move to the third and highest level of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

## Soft Natured

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verses 43-44:

*“Go, both of you [including Prophet Musa, peace be upon him], to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed. And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah].”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters.

This is an important characteristic which must be adopted by all Muslims. It should be used in all aspects of one's life. It is important to understand that being gentle benefits the Muslim themselves more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and minimize the amount of sins they commit, as a gentle person is less likely to commit sins through their speech and actions, but it benefits them in worldly affairs also. For example, the person who treats their spouse gently will gain more love and respect in return than if they treated their spouse in a harsh manner. Children are more likely to obey and treat their parents with respect when they are treated gently. Colleagues at work are more likely to help the one who is gentle with them. The examples are endless. Only in very rare cases is a harsh attitude required. In most cases, gentle behaviour will be much more effective than a harsh attitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possesses countless good qualities yet, Allah, the exalted, specifically highlighted his gentleness in the Holy Quran as it is a key ingredient required to affect others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Al Imran, verse 159:

*“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”*

A Muslim must remember that they will never be better than a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, nor will the person they interact with be worse than Pharaoh yet, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Musa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them, to deal with Pharaoh in a kind manner.

Therefore, a Muslim should adopt gentleness in all affairs as it leads to much reward and affects others, such as one's family, in a positive way.

## **A Firm Support**

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 46:

*"[Allah] said, "Fear not. Indeed, I am with you both [including Prophet Musa, peace be upon him]; I hear and I see.""*

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He is with anyone who remembers Him.

With the rise of mental problems and disorders, such as depression, it is vital for Muslims to understand the importance of this declaration. There is a small chance of a person experiencing a mental issue when they are constantly surrounded and aided by someone that truly loves them. If this is true for a person it is undoubtedly more befitting for Allah, the Exalted, who has promised to be with the one who remembers Him. Acting on this declaration alone would eliminate all mental issues, such as depression. It is the reason why being secluded from others or being amongst others did not affect the mental state of the righteous predecessors as they were always in the company of Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious that when one obtains the company of Allah, the Exalted, they will overcome all obstacles and difficulties successfully until they reach His proximity in the hereafter.

In addition, out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, has not restricted this declaration in anyway. For example, He did not declare He was only with the righteous or with those who perform specific good deeds. He in fact encompassed every Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith or how many sins they have committed. So a Muslim should never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. But it is important to note the condition mentioned in this Hadith namely, to remember Allah, the Exalted. This is not only remembering Him with one's tongue but more importantly it is to remember Him through one's actions. This is only achieved by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The one who behaves in such a manner will be blessed with the company and support of Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, the more one obeys Allah, the Exalted, the more they will receive His company. What one gives is what they shall receive.

## Following Real Guidance

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verses 47-48:

*“[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was commanded to say]...And peace will be upon he who follows the guidance...punishment will be upon whoever denies and turns away.”*

In this age, peace will only be granted to those who sincerely follow and obey the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Muslims should not follow and adopt the customary practices of non-Muslims. The more Muslims do this the less they will follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is quite evident in this day and age as many Muslims have adopted the cultural practices of other nations which has caused them to become distant from the teachings of Islam. For example, one only needs to observe the modern Muslim wedding to observe how many non-Muslim cultural practices have been adopted by Muslims. What makes this worse is that many Muslims cannot differentiate between Islamic practices based on the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Because of this non-Muslims cannot differentiate between them either which has caused great problems for Islam. For example, honour killings

is a cultural practice which has nothing to do with Islam yet because of the ignorance of Muslims and their habit of adopting non-Muslim cultural practices Islam is blamed every time an honour killing occurs in society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, removed the social barriers in the form of casts and brotherhoods in order to unite people yet ignorant Muslims have resurrected them by adopting the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Simply put, the more cultural practices Muslims adopt the less they will act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.



## One Creator

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 50:

*"He [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] said, "Our Lord is He who gave each thing its form..."*

Allah, the Exalted, is Al Khaliq, which means the Creator, Al Baari which means the Maker and Al Musawwir which means the Fashioner.

The Creator is the One who brings something into existence. In reality, there is no Creator except Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One who creates without any aid from another. On other hand, an inventor only invents things through the aid of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 96:

*"While Allah created you and that which you do?"*

The Maker is the One who arranges all of the creation and prepares them for receiving the forms He has chosen for them which is linked to the next divine name mentioned earlier namely, the Fashioner.

The Creator makes things manifest. The Maker chooses their shape, appearance, and time of creation. The Fashioner fashions the creation according to His divine will.

After understanding these divine names a Muslim must trust Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. If Allah, the Exalted, created and manages the entire universe He is more than capable in sorting out a person's problems. In addition, these names indicate that Allah, the Exalted, is the One who creates and chooses all things. So a Muslim should not challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to nothing except disappointment. It is therefore better to submit obediently and patiently await relief knowing that Allah, the Exalted, only decrees the best for His servants even if this wisdom is not obvious to them. As a Muslim is short sighted it is better to trust in the Creator whose wisdom has no limits. 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.”*

## Guidance

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 50:

*“He [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] said, “Our Lord is He who... then guided.””*

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who guides His servants to what is beneficial for them in both worlds and guides them away from anything which harms them. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verse 8:

*“And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness.”*

The Muslim who understands this divine name will seek guidance in worldly and religious matters from none other than Allah, the Exalted, through the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever seeks guidance from anything else will not find lasting success.

A Muslim should act on this divine name by guiding others towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and what is beneficial to them in both worldly and religious matters according to their knowledge. This will ensure they become a true believer meaning, the one who loves for others what they desire for themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

## Tolerating Others

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 57:

*“He [Pharaoh] said, “Have you come to us to drive us out of our land with your magic, O Moses?””*

Whenever one invites others towards Islam, commands good and forbids evil they will be challenging the heedless lifestyle of many others which will inspire them to resist the truth anyway they can. The major reason all the past nations rejected their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, was due to this very reason. They could not abandon their lifestyles and characteristics and in defense of them were prepared to wage war against Allah, the Exalted, and their Holy Prophet, peace be upon him. When one takes up this important duty they must be prepared to face many hardships caused by others including their own relatives. The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, are the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they encountered countless difficulties from their nations. One only needs to study the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to observe this fact. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472, that no one in creation had been persecuted in the path of Allah, the Exalted, more than him.

In cases like this one's response to the bad attitude of others should be educated, respectful and gentle. An example of this is found in chapter 19 Maryam, verses 46-47:

*"[His father] said, "Have you no desire for my gods, O Abraham? If you do not desist, I will surely stone you, so avoid me a prolonged time." [Abraham] said, "Peace [i.e., safety] will be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Indeed, He is ever gracious to me."*

Here the kind and respectful response of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, to the harsh attitude of his elder is discussed.

In most cases, a person must possess a character flaw if they claim to get along with everyone. Due to the differences within the members of society a person will never get along with everyone. They will always be one or more that disagree with their mentality, life style and advice. This diversity will lead to tension and occasionally problems. But if a person is liked by everyone then in most cases it shows they have adopted the mentality of the hypocrites by being two-faced. If the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were not loved by all how can a normal person achieve this status? This is the reason one should not believe in propaganda as the group that were mistreated the most in this way were the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023.

For example, the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was once falsely accused of illegal relations by a shameless woman. She was

enticed into slandering him by the enemy of Allah, the Exalted, Quraon. When she accused the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, publically during a religious gathering he interrogated her. When she observed his reaction she immediately retracted her accusation and admitted the truth. As a result Allah, the Exalted, destroyed Quraon by commanding the Earth to swallow him and his great treasury. This incident has been recorded in Imam Dhahabi's, The Major Sins, Pages 166-167. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 81:

*“And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home...”*

The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were slandered on many occasions but they remained steadfast on their mission until they were granted victory by Allah, the Exalted. When Allah, the Exalted, decides to complete a task like aiding the one who spreads the true word of faith the entire creation combined cannot stop Him.

Muslims must accept that they too will face hardships when spreading the word of Islam. Therefore, they must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, by remaining steadfast in the face of difficulties. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. If one desires to join them in the next world they must adopt this attitude also.

## Evil Planning

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 60:

*“So Pharaoh went away, put together his plan, and then came [to challenge the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him].”*

One should never plot to do an evil thing as it will always, one way or another, backfire on them. Even if these consequences are delayed to the next world they will face them eventually. For example, the brothers of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, desired to harm him as they desired the love, respect and affection of their father the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him. But it is clear that their scheming only put them further away from their desire. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 18:

*“And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, “Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting...”*

The more one plots evil the more Allah, the Exalted, will put them further from their goal. Even if they outwardly achieve their desire Allah, the Exalted, will cause the very thing they desired to become a curse for them in both worlds unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:



*“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then do they await except the way [i.e., fate] of the former peoples?...”*

## Being Honest

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 61:

*"Moses said to them [i.e., the magicians summoned by Pharaoh], "Woe to you! Do not invent a lie against Allāh or He will exterminate you with a punishment; and he has failed who invents [such falsehood].""*

Even though the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was referring to the magic demonstrated by the magicians who came to challenge him none the less, Muslims can learn an important lesson from this incident.

Some have adopted a strange attitude. When they are questioned about things they are unaware of instead of admitting the truth they give a reply which has little or no foundation in the truth. This can become a serious issue especially in matters connected to Islam. A Muslim may get punished for giving incorrect information which others act on. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. This is because they ignorantly attributed things to Allah, the Exalted, or the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Because of these people strange beliefs and customs have become attached to Islam which is a great deviation from the truth brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, many of the cultural customs Muslims have adopted believing them to be a part of Islam occurred because of this ignorant mentality.

These people believe that if they simply admit they do not know something they will appear foolish to others. This mentality in itself is extremely foolish as the righteous predecessors would stress the importance of admitting one's ignorance so that others do not become misguided. In fact, the righteous predecessors would only count the person who behaved in this manner as an intelligent person and counted the one who answered every question posed to them a fool.

This attitude is often observed in elders who often advise their children on issues relating to the world and religion instead of admitting their ignorance and directing them to someone who knows the truth. When elders act in this way they fail their duty in rightly guiding their dependents which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

Muslims should therefore, gain correct knowledge, whether worldly or religious, before advising others and in cases they are unaware of something they should admit it as this will not reduce their rank in anyway. If anything Allah, the Exalted, and people will appreciate their honesty.

## Private Discussions

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verses 61-62:

*“Moses said to them [i.e., the magicians summoned by Pharaoh], “Woe to you! Do not invent a lie against Allah or He will exterminate you with a punishment; and he has failed who invents [such falsehood].” So they disputed over their affair among themselves and concealed their private conversation.”*

Verse 62 is connected to chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

*“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”*

In this verse Allah, the exalted, explains how people should conduct themselves when conversing with others so that they derive benefit for themselves and others. The first is that when Muslims gather they should discuss how to benefit others which encompasses charity in the form of wealth and physical aid. If a Muslim is not in a position to help a needy person then this is an excellent way of gaining reward equal to

actually helping them. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6800, advises that the one who inspires someone else towards good will be rewarded as if they performed the good action themselves. If one cannot aid someone in difficulty or inspire another to fulfill this task they can at least encourage others to supplicate for the one in need. Supplication for an absent person causes the Angels to pray for the supplicator. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534. This mentality can inspire the group to visit the needy person which provides them with emotional support. This has a powerful psychological impact and provides them with a new mode of strength when dealing with their hardship. The important thing to note is that when one mentions the situation of a needy person their intention must be to aid them in their hour of need. It should never be for the sake of passing time and making them a target of ridicule.

The second way to gain blessings is when one converses about anything lawful that will provide benefit to someone in this world or the next. This aspect includes advising others to do good and refrain from evil in every aspect of their life.

The third aspect mentioned in this verse involves conversing with others with a constructive mindset which brings people together in a positive way instead of possessing a destructive mindset which causes divisions within society. If a person cannot bring people together in a loving way then the minimum they can do is not cause divisions amongst them. Even this is recorded as a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2518.

In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, advises that reconciling between two opposing Muslims for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is superior to voluntary prayer and fasting. Every good thing found within society was the outcome of this pious attitude such as the construction of schools, hospitals and Mosques.

But it is important to note, that a Muslim will only obtain the great reward mentioned in this verse when they perform the righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Each person will be rewarded based on their intention not just their physical action. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The insincere Muslim will find that on Judgment Day they will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

## Remaining Steadfast

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verses 70-72:

*“So the magicians fell down in prostration. They said, “We have believed in the Lord of Aaron and Moses.” [Pharaoh] said, “You believed him [i.e., Moses] before I gave you permission...So I will surely cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will crucify you on the trunks of palm trees, and you will surely know which of us is more severe in [giving] punishment and more enduring.” They said, “Never will we prefer you over what has come to us of clear proofs and [over] He who created us. So decree whatever you are to decree. You can only decree for this worldly life.””*

These verses remind Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous

deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend himself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable Muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.



## Choose the Right Guide

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 79:

*“And Pharaoh led his people astray and did not guide [them].”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who guides others to something good will receive the same reward as those who act on their advice. And those who guide others to sins will be held accountable as if they committed the sins.

It is important for Muslims to be careful when advising and guiding others. A Muslim should only advise others in matters of good so that they gain reward from it and avoid advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. A person will not escape punishment on Judgment Day by simply claiming they are only inviting others towards sins even if they did not commit the sins themselves. Allah, the Exalted, will hold both the guide and the follower accountable for their actions. Muslims should therefore only advise others to do the things they would do themselves. If they dislike an action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

Because of this Islamic principle Muslims should ensure they gain the adequate knowledge before advising others as they can easily multiply their own sins if they incorrectly advise others.

In addition, this principle is an extremely easy way for Muslims to gain reward for actions they cannot perform themselves due to a lack of means, such as wealth. For example, a person who is not financially able to donate charity can encourage others to do so and this will result in them gaining the same reward as the one who gave charity.

## Hastening to Obedience

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verses 83-84:

*"[Allah said], "And what made you hasten from your people, O Moses?"  
He said, "...I hastened to You, my Lord, that You be pleased."*

Muslims must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, by always hastening to the actions which please Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2306, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to hasten in performing righteous deeds before seven things occur.

The first is overwhelming poverty. This can refer to financial difficulties which distract a person from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. In addition, stressing over wealth can even push one towards the unlawful. A Muslim should remember that any righteous deed rooted in the unlawful will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. Allah, the Exalted, has allocated provision for the entire creation over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and

the Earth according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Therefore, a Muslim should trust that their lawful provision will reach them as long as they continue to strive for it in lawful ways according to the teachings of Islam. A Muslim should remember that Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants according to His infinite wisdom. He does not give according to someone's desires as this will most likely lead to their destruction. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

And 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..."*

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims should hasten in performing righteous deeds before they become distracted by wealth. Wealth itself is not evil but depending on how one obtains it and uses it can either make it a great blessing for them or a great burden for them in both worlds. If a Muslim strives to obtain excess wealth while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people while hoarding or misspending their wealth it will become a great curse for them in both worlds. But if a Muslim obtains enough to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance and spends in other ways

pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, then they will achieve true richness in both worlds.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion which prevents righteous actions is a debilitating sickness. This is a warning to make use of one's good health before they encounter sickness. One should observe those who have lost their good health either through sickness or through ageing and therefore make use of the good health they possess by striving to gain success in lawful worldly matters as well as religious matters while giving priority to religion over the world. For example, a Muslim should use their good health to journey to the Mosques regularly in order to offer their obligatory prayers with congregation before a time comes when they desire to do this but do not possess the physical strength to do so. The amazing thing about utilizing one's good health correctly is that when a Muslim eventually loses it Allah, the Exalted, will continue to grant them the same reward they used to receive when doing good deeds during their time of good health. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. But those who live in heedlessness fail to utilise their good health and therefore receive no reward during their good health or when they fall ill.

This is connected to the next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion namely, senility. A Muslim should make use of their youth and strong intelligence before they reach senility. This includes gaining and acting on knowledge and using one's mental strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It is important to behave in this manner before senility occurs as even the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sought refuge from senility in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6390.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion which prevents righteous actions is a sudden death. Death is certain but the time is unknown. A Muslim should not live in heedlessness believing that their death is far away as countless people have and will die long before reaching their life expectancy. Nor should they live in such a way as if they are not going to die at all. Having hopes of a long life can be considered the root of all evil as it causes one to delay performing righteous deeds believing they can always perform them tomorrow. It causes them to delay sincere repentance thereby, failing to change for the better believing they can do this tomorrow. And having hopes for a long life causes one to prioritize obtaining worldly things, such as wealth, in order to make their expected long life on this Earth comfortable. These prevent one from preparing adequately for the hereafter. Muslims should therefore reduce their hope for a long life so that they change for the better and direct their focus to the permanent hereafter. Muslims should not delay and instead act today as the tomorrow they hope for may never arrive. They should also strive to perform the righteous deeds which will benefit them in case their life ends unexpectedly, such as an ongoing charity, which benefits others as long as the thing is being used, such as a water well. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the arrival of the anti-Christ. This event will prevent one from performing righteous deeds and instead tempt them towards disbelief. One lesson to learn from this is the importance of avoiding doubtful things. Just like a person who journeys close to a border is more likely to cross it similarly, a Muslim who is surrounded by temptations will more likely be led astray and fail to perform righteous deeds. The one who avoids places and things which tempt them to commit sins will protect their faith and honour. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. Muslims should therefore guard their faith by avoiding things, places and the people who invite or tempt them towards

the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and ensure their dependents, such as their children, do the same.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion which prevents one from performing righteous deeds is the Final Hour.

This is when the trumpet blast will occur. The trumpet blast will lead to the death of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7381. The important thing to learn is that this is a call which no one can or will reject responding to. It will lead to the resurrection and final judgment. Therefore, Muslims should respond to the call of Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through sincere obedience by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verse 24:

*“O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life...”*

Whoever responds to this call in this world will find the final call easy to endure and respond to. Whereas, the one who lives heedless to the call of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will not find peace in this world and they will be forced to answer the call of the trumpet which will be a great burden for them to endure and respond to. A person can only ignore the call of Allah, the Exalted, for so long as the final call will occur, sooner or

later, and no one will be able to avoid or ignore it. If this is inevitable it makes sense that one respond to it now, today, instead of living in heedlessness. If one hears the trumpet blast while heedless no action or regret will benefit them and what comes after for this person will be even more terrifying.



## A Long Life

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 86:

*“So Moses returned to his people, angry and grieved. He said, “O my people, did your Lord not make you a good promise? Then, was the time too long for you...””*

The children of Israel failed to maintain their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, while they waited for the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, to return to them.

Muslims should not follow in their footsteps by failing to prepare for the Day of Judgement through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by assuming the promised Judgement Day is far away.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a Muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a

person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. 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. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach Muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

*“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.” But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”*

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

## Seeking Help

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 12-13:

*“He [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] said, “My Lord, indeed I fear that they will deny me. And that my breast will tighten and my tongue will not be fluent, so send for Aaron.””*

Muslims should only consult a few people in respect to their affairs. They should select these few people according to the advice of the Holy Quran. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 43:

*“...So ask the people of the message if you do not know.”*

This verse reminds Muslims to consult those who possess knowledge. As consulting an ignorant person only leads to further trouble. Just like a person would be foolish to consult a car mechanic over their physical health a Muslim should only consult those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

In addition, a Muslim should only consult those who fear Allah, the Exalted. This is because they will never advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, those who do not fear or obey Allah, the Exalted, might possess knowledge and experience but they will easily advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, which only increases one's problems. In reality, those who fear Allah, the Exalted, possess true knowledge and only this knowledge will guide others through their problems successfully. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

*“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”*

As the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon him, possessed both these qualities the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, requested for his help.

## **Lord of the Worlds**

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 23-24:

*"Said Pharaoh, "And what is the Lord of the worlds?" [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] said, "The Lord of the heavens and earth and that between them, if you should be convinced.""*

Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord of the Worlds as He is the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe. He has full control over every single entity from the smallest atom to the largest creation such as the divine throne. Except for a few members of the creation every atom in existence recognises and acknowledges this great fact and thus continuously praises Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 44:

*"The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them exalt Him. And there is not a thing except that it exalts [Allah] by His praise, but you do not understand their [way of] exalting..."*

No creature has the power to free themselves of His Lordship whether they believe in Him or not. His Lordship has no equivalent as it includes all of creation. It has no beginning, no end and no decline in authority or control. Allah, the Exalted, in His infinite knowledge knew the weakness of the creation in praising Him, according to His infinite status, so out of

mercy He declared how to praise Him in this verse. Otherwise, how can a finite creature praise the Creator, according to His infinite status, without aid from Allah, the Exalted? This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 879.

As Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord of the universe He must be obeyed and never disobeyed. A Muslim must only be obedient to others when it involves the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Acknowledging the Lordship of Allah, the Exalted, includes acknowledging one's servanthood to Him. This in itself is a clear declaration that a Muslim must not chart their own course in life but they must simply adhere to the commands of their Lord, Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a Muslim should never declare their servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, by declaring His Lordship through their words and then contradict their declaration through their actions.

## Refocusing on the Hereafter

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 46-50:

*"So the magicians fell down in prostration [to Allah]...[Pharaoh] said, "You believed him [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] before I gave you permission. Indeed, he is your leader who has taught you magic, but you are going to know. I will surely cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will surely crucify you all." They said, "No harm. Indeed, to our Lord we will return.""*

Often when Muslims receive blessings especially, beyond their need, it distracts them from the hereafter and instead focuses their minds on this material world. So in this respect, the wisdom behind a difficulty is to refocus a Muslim's attention on what is truly important which is preparing for the hereafter. This is like a person who is so preoccupied with their phone that they cross a road without seeing an oncoming vehicle. Another person violently pulls them away from the oncoming car which causes them distress yet, saves their life. Even though being pulled violently causes distress and even pain but it is only done in order to refocus their attention on the life threatening danger namely, the oncoming car. Similarly, a Muslim faces emotional and physical difficulties in order to refocus their attention on more important things such as the hereafter. If a Muslim was left to only face times of ease without difficulties there is no doubt that they would become lost in enjoying the excess of this material world. This neglect in the long run would be disastrous for them. So they face a small difficulty in order to protect them from greater difficulties namely, the difficulties of the hereafter. Therefore, Muslims should remember this truth every time



they face a difficulty so that they leave the difficulty refocused on more important things and act correctly over this blessing instead of demonstrating impatience and heedlessness to this vital benefit. This is in fact one of the biggest favours of Allah, the Exalted.

## The Sea

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 62-63:

*"[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] said, "No! Indeed, with me is my Lord; He will guide me." Then We inspired to Moses, "Strike with your staff the sea," and it parted, and each portion was like a great towering mountain."*

The miracle of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, parting the red sea is very well known. This great event teaches Muslims that whenever they encounter a difficult situation they should remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, trusting that He will provide them a way out of it even if this seems impossible at the time just like He done for the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, and his nation. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

*"...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out."*

A Muslim should understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best for His servants even if the wisdoms behind the difficulty are not obvious. It is a person's reaction which either leads to blessings or the anger of Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to reflect on the countless examples in their own life where they believed something was bad only to change

their mind later on and vice versa. This is just like when a person takes a bitter medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. Even though the medicine is bitter they still take it believing it will benefit them. It is strange how a Muslim can trust a doctor whose knowledge is limited and who is not absolutely certain the bitter medicine will benefit them and fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge is infinite and when He only decrees the best for His servants.

A Muslim should understand the difference between wishful thinking and trust in Allah, the Exalted. The person who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, and then expects Him to help them in difficulties is a wishful thinker. The one who will gain the help of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated in this great event, is the one who sincerely strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience and then trusts His judgment without complaining or questioning His choice.

## **Good Company Leads to Good**

The next discussion is based on chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 65:

*“And We saved Moses and those with him, all together.”*

They were saved as they adopted the companionship of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5534, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between a good and bad companion. The good companion is like a person who sells perfume. Their companion will either obtain some perfume or at least be affected by the pleasant smell. Whereas, a bad companion is like a blacksmith, if their companion does not burn their clothes they will certainly be affected by the smoke.

Muslims must understand that the people they accompany will have an effect on them whether this affect is positive or negative, obvious or subtle. It is not possible to accompany someone and not be affected by it. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, confirms that a person is on their companion's religion. Meaning, a person adopts the characteristics of their companion. It is therefore important for Muslims to always accompany the righteous as they will undoubtedly affect them in

a positive way meaning, they will inspire them to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Whereas, bad companions will either inspire one to disobey Allah, the Exalted, or they will encourage a Muslim to concentrate on the material world over preparing for the hereafter. This attitude will become a great regret for them on Judgment Day even if the things they strive for are lawful but beyond their needs.

Finally, as a person will end up with those they love in the hereafter according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, a Muslim must practically show they love for the righteous by accompanying them in this world. But if they accompany bad or heedless people then it proves and indicates they love for them and their ultimate destination in the hereafter. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

*“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”*

## The All Mighty

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 9:

*“O Moses, indeed it is I - Allah, the Exalted in Might...”*

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

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

Whoever desires for their faith to become mighty must obey the All Mighty, Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be granted strong faith which will aid them to overcome all difficulties so that they leave this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. True obedience only lies in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

*“Say, [O Muhammad], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins.”*

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

## The Wise

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 9:

*“O Moses, indeed it is I – Allah...the Wise.”*

Allah, the Exalted, possesses infinite knowledge of all things and their real nature and acts according to His infinite wisdom in a perfect manner. The Muslim who understands this divine name will never object to His choices and decrees knowing that there is wisdom behind each choice of Allah, the Exalted, which benefits His servants even if they are not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

A Muslim should act on this divine name by using their knowledge and blessings according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, as this is the ultimate wisdom a person can possess.



## Balanced Emotions

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 10:

*“And [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was told], “Throw down your staff.” But when he saw it writhing as if it were a snake, he turned in flight and did not return. [Allah said], “O Moses, fear not. Indeed, in My presence the messengers do not fear.””*

This event indicates that being emotional within limits is acceptable when facing different situations such as being sad during a difficult time. The Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, reacted in a normal way by fleeing from the snake and was not criticised by Allah, the Exalted, as showing emotion is a part of being human. As long as the emotion is within the limits of Islam it is completely acceptable to show it. No one expects a Muslim to act like a robot in difficult situations. In each situation, a Muslim should maintain a balance whereby they release their tension through their emotions without crossing the limits of Islam. This has been indicated in chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

*“In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you. And Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.”*

This verse does not prohibit a person from being sad or happy. But it advises one not to be extreme in these two emotions namely, grief and to be exultant both of which can lead to sins.

A Muslim should always remember that as long as they remain within these limits they will successfully overcome all difficulties, earn reward and blessings in both worlds. This has been indicated at the end of this great event where Allah, the Exalted, granted safety to the one who obeyed Him. This safety may not be obvious to a Muslim in the short term but it will eventually be revealed to them in this world or in the next.

## Protection from Fear

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verses 10-11:

*“...[Allāh said], "O Moses, fear not...I am truly Most Forgiving and Merciful to those who do wrong, and then replace their evil with good.””*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4251, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people commit sins but the best person who commits sins is the one who sincerely repents.

As people are not Angels they are bound to commit sins. The thing that makes these people special is when they sincerely repent from their sins. Sincere repentance includes feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, making a firm promise not to commit the sin or a similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

It is important to note, minor sins can be erased through righteous deeds which has been advised in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 550. It advises that the five daily obligatory prayers and two consecutive Friday congregational prayers erase the

minor sins committed in between them as long as major sins are avoided.

Major sins are only erased through sincere repentance. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to avoid all sins, minor and major, and if they happen to occur to immediately sincerely repent as the time of death is unknown. And they should continue obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

## Avoid Being Stubborn

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verses 12-14:

*“...[These are] among the nine signs [you Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, will take] to Pharaoh and his people. Indeed, they have been a people defiantly disobedient.”...And they rejected them, while their [inner] selves were convinced thereof, out of injustice and haughtiness...”*

Some adopt stubbornness in worldly matters and as a result they do not change their character for the better. Instead, they remain steadfast on their attitude believing this is somehow a sign of their great strength and wisdom. Steadfastness in matters of faith is a praiseworthy attitude but in most worldly matters it is only called stubbornness, which is blameworthy.

Unfortunately, some believe if they change their attitude it demonstrates weakness or it shows that they are admitting their fault and because of this they stubbornly fail to change for the better. Adults behave like immature children by believing that if they change their behaviour it means they have lost while others who remain steadfast on their attitude have won. This is simply childish.

In reality, an intelligent person will remain steadfast on matters of faith but in worldly matters they will change their attitude, as long as it is not sinful, in order to make their life easier. So changing to improve one's life is not a sign of weakness it is in fact a sign of intelligence.

In many cases, a person refuses to change their attitude and expects others in their life to change theirs, such as their relatives. But what often occurs is that due to stubbornness all remain in the same state which only leads to regular disagreements and arguments. A wise person understands that if the people around them do not change for the better than they should. This change will improve the quality of their life and their relationship with others which is much better than going around in circular arguments with people. This positive attitude will eventually cause others to respect them as it takes real strength to change one's character for the better.

Those who remain stubborn will always find something to be annoyed about which will remove peace from their life. This will cause further difficulties in all aspects of their life, such as their mental health. But those who adapt and change for the better will always move from one station of peace to another. If one achieves this peace does it really matter if others believe they only changed because they were wrong?

To conclude, to remain steadfast on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is praiseworthy. But in worldly matters and in cases where no sin is committed a person should learn to adapt and change their attitude so that they find some peace in this world.

## Constructive Mentality

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 4:

*“Indeed, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and made its people into factions, oppressing a sector among them...”*

Dividing people is a destructive mentality employed by the misguided who desire to weaken the bonds between people. Muslims must avoid this mentality and instead strive to adopt a constructive mentality thereby uniting people on good.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6541, discusses some aspects of creating unity within society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, firstly advised Muslims not to envy each other.

This is when a person desires to obtain the very blessing someone else possesses meaning, they desire for the owner to lose the blessing. And it involves disliking the fact that the owner was given the blessing by Allah, the Exalted, instead of them. Some only desire this to occur in their hearts without showing it through their actions or speech. If they dislike their thought and feeling it is hoped that they will not be held accountable for their envy. Some exert efforts through their speech and

actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when a person strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing.

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feeling and if they strive to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second is when a person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

The evil type of envy, as mentioned earlier, directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The envious person behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. This is why it is a major sin. In fact, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903, envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

An envious Muslim must strive to act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. An envious Muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by



showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that Muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A Muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A Muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A Muslim should remember that other people are not perfect just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a Muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess.

Another point must be made on this topic. A Muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those who oppose their scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars a Muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other Muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a Muslim to sever ties with another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another Muslim. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a Muslim should continue to advise the other Muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims are commanded to be like brothers to one another. This is only achievable if they obey the previous advice given in this Hadith and strive to fulfil their duty towards other Muslims according to the teachings of Islam, such as helping others in matters of good and warning them from evil matters. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, advises that a Muslim should fulfil the following rights of other Muslims: they are to return the Islamic greeting of peace, to visit the sick, to take part in their funeral prayers and to reply to the sneezer who praises Allah, the Exalted. A

Muslim must learn and fulfil all the rights other people, especially other Muslims, have over them.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a Muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another Muslim. The sins a person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4884, that whoever humiliates another Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will humiliate them. And whoever protects a Muslim from humiliation will be protected by Allah, the Exalted.

The negative characteristics mentioned in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning can develop when one adopts pride. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, pride is when one looks down on others in contempt. The proud person sees themselves as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in

a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a Muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that it is a sin for a Muslim to hate another Muslim. This hatred applies to worldly things and not disliking others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, loving and hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then a Muslim must show respect to others in all cases and dislike only their sins without actually hating the person. In addition, their dislike must never cause them to act against the teachings of Islam as this would prove their hatred is based on their own desires and not for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The root cause of despising others for worldly reasons is pride. It is vital to understand that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a Muslim's life, property and honour are all sacred. A Muslim must not violate any of these rights without a just reason. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true Muslim until they protect other people, including non-Muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these

rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should treat others exactly how they want people to treat them. This will lead to much blessings for an individual and create unity within their society.

## Fear of Losing

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 6:

*“...and show Pharaoh and [his minister] Haman and their soldiers through them [the children of Israel led by the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] that which they had feared.”*

Pharaoh and Haman feared losing their worldly status and possessions which Allah, the Exalted, decided would occur through the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, and his nation.

It is part of normal behaviour to fear losing one's possessions. In fact, generally speaking the more one possesses the more they will fear losing them and the less they possess the less they will fear. This is just like the person who goes out in the middle of the night while possessing many valuable things, such as an expensive phone and tablet. This person will obviously have more fear of losing their possessions than the one who leaves their home in the middle of the night while carrying nothing valuable. Muslims should therefore understand the reality of this in respect to this temporal world and the eternal hereafter. The one who possesses much worldly things which will not benefit them in the hereafter, such as excess wealth they have hoarded will always fear leaving this world through death and the troubles of this world more than the one who possesses less worldly things. This fear removes the very aim of these possessions which is to achieve peace of mind and body.

In fact, achieving peace of mind and body is the very reason people strive in this material world. But in order to remove this fear a Muslim does not need to become physically empty handed. They only need to detach from their possessions spiritually. This is achieved when one only takes from this material world in order to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents and then dedicates the rest of their worldly blessings towards the hereafter by using them as prescribed by Islam. This will ensure that they truly own their possessions instead of their belongings possessing them. This will also remove the fear of losing their possessions as they have already sent them forward to the hereafter for safe keeping. This will allow them to achieve peace of mind and body in this world and in the next.

## A Trusting Mother

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 6:

*“And We inspired to the mother of Moses, “Suckle him; but when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear and do not grieve. Indeed, We will return him to you and will make him [one] of the messengers.””*

The mother of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was inspired to save him during his infancy from the soldiers of Pharaoh. This verse indicates the importance of trusting in Allah, the Exalted. True trust in Allah, the Exalted, is composed of two elements. The first is using the lawful means one has been provided by Allah, the Exalted. The second element is to trust that the outcome which Allah, the Exalted, chooses will be the best one even if a person does not immediately observe the wisdom behind it. The mother of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, fulfilled both aspects. She did not remain in her home without taking action trusting Allah, the Exalted, would save her son. She physically struggled according to the lawful means she possessed and then trusted in the plan of Allah, the Exalted. Muslims should never be extreme and adopt one aspect without the other. Using the means is an aspect of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, as the means were created and provided by none other than Allah, the Exalted. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised someone in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2517, to use the means they possessed by tying up their camel but to also trust that Allah, the Exalted, would safeguard the camel.



Going on social benefits and claiming trust in Allah, the Exalted, is not according to the teachings of Islam. Those who behave in such a manner do not trust Allah, the Exalted, only the government. This behaviour is only acceptable if a person is rightfully entitled to social benefits. A Muslim must use their means such as their physical strength and then trust Allah, the Exalted, will provide and choose the best thing for them in all cases.

## Importance of Certainty

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 7-10:

*“And We inspired to the mother of Moses, “Suckle him; but when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear and do not grieve. Indeed, We will return him to you and will make him [one] of the messengers.”...And the heart of Moses' mother became empty [of all else]. She was about to disclose [the matter concerning] him had We not bound fast her heart that she would be of the believers.”*

The mother of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, remained firm as she possessed certainty of faith. Weakness in faith is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the

Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a Muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. 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...”*

For example, if a Muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

*“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”*

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a Muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

## A Blessed Gift

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 14:

*“And when he [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] attained his full strength and was [mentally] mature, We bestowed upon him judgement and 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. This is in fact the wisdom mentioned in this verse.

## Thinking Matters Through

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 15:

*“And he entered the city at a time of inattention by its people and found therein two men fighting: one from his faction and one from among his enemy. And the one from his faction called for help to him against the one from his enemy, so Moses struck him and [unintentionally] killed him. [Moses] said, "This is from the work of Satan. Indeed, he is a manifest, misleading enemy.””*

The Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, mentioned the Devil as being hasty and acting without fully thinking things through is connected to him.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2012, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking things through is from Allah, the Exalted, while being hasty is from the Devil.

This is an extremely important teaching to understand and act on as Muslims who perform much righteous deeds often destroy them through hastiness. For example, they may utter some evil words in a fit of rage

which may cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

The vast majority of sins and difficulties, such as arguments, occur because people fail to think things through and instead act in a hasty way. The sign of intelligence is when one thinks before speaking or acting and only precedes when they know their speech or action is good and beneficial in worldly or religious matters.

Even though, a Muslim should not delay in performing righteous deeds yet, they should still think things through before performing them. This is because a righteous deed may receive no reward simply because its conditions and etiquettes have not been fulfilled because of one's hastiness. In this respect, one should only move forward in any matter after they have thought things through.

The one who behaves in this manner will not only minimize their sins and increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, but they will minimize the difficulties they encounter, such as arguments and disagreements, in all aspects of their life.



## Helping Others

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 17:

*“He [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] said, “My Lord...I will never be an assistant to the criminals.””*

Muslims must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, by assisting others in what is good and avoiding helping them in things which are bad.

Since the passing of the righteous predecessors the strength of the Muslim nation has weakened dramatically. It is logical that the greater the number of people in a group the stronger the group will become yet Muslims have somehow defied this logic. The strength of the Muslim nation has only decreased as the number of Muslims have increased. One of the main reasons this has occurred is connected to chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2 of the Holy Quran:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands Muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many Muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many Muslims now observe who is doing an action instead of observing what they are doing. If the person is linked to them for example, a relative, they support them even if the thing is not good. Similarly, if the person has no relationship with them they turn away from supporting them even if the thing is good. This attitude completely contradicts the traditions of the righteous predecessors. They would support others in good irrespective of who was doing it. In fact, they went so far on acting on this verse of the Holy Quran that they would even support those they did not get on with as long as it was a good thing.

The other thing connected to this is that many Muslims fail to support each other in good as they believe the person they are supporting will gain more prominence than them. This condition has even affected scholars and Islamic educational institutes. They make lame excuses not to aid others in good as they do not have a relationship with them and they fear their own institution will be forgotten and those they help will gain further respect in society. But this is completely wrong as one only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the truth. As long as one's intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, supporting others in good will increase their respect within society. Allah, the Exalted, will cause the hearts of the people to turn to them even if their support is for another organisation, institution or person. For example, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed this world Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily challenged for the Caliphate and would have found plenty of support in his favour. But he knew the right thing to do was to nominate Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not worry about being forgotten by society if he supported another person. He instead obeyed the command in the verse mentioned earlier and supported what was right. This is confirmed in the Hadiths found in

Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. The honour and respect of Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, within society only increased by this action. This is obvious to those who are aware of Islamic history.

Muslims must reflect on this deeply, change their mentality and strive to aid others in good irrespective of who is doing it and not hold back fearing their support will cause them to be forgotten within society. Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will never be forgotten in both this world and the next. In fact, their respect and honour will only grow in both worlds.

## Never Fooled Twice

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 15-18:

*“And he [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] entered the city...and found therein two men fighting: one from his faction and one from among his enemy. And the one from his faction called for help to him against the one from his enemy, so Moses struck him and [unintentionally] killed him...And he [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] became inside the city...when suddenly the one who sought his help the previous day cried out to him [once again]. Moses said to him, "Indeed, you are an evident, [persistent] deviator.””*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6133, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a believer does not get stung from the same hole twice.

This means that a believer does not get fooled by something or someone twice. This includes committing sins. A true believer is not immune to committing sins. But when they happen to commit them they do not repeat their mistake and instead learn and change for the better by sincerely repenting to Allah, the Exalted.

A true believer does not blindly trust people thereby increasing the chances of being wronged by them. But if they are fooled by anyone they should overlook and pardon as this leads to their forgiveness. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”*

But they should also change their behaviour by treading cautiously when dealing with this person thereby ensuring they do not get fooled again. There is a vast difference between forgiving others and blindly trusting them especially, after they have wronged someone.

This Hadith applies to every aspect of one's life as a true believer is the one who constantly learns from their experiences and knowledge in order to change for the better so that they increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

## Concealing Mistakes

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 15-19:

*“And he [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] entered the city...and found therein two men fighting: one from his faction and one from among his enemy. And the one from his faction called for help to him against the one from his enemy, so Moses struck him and [unintentionally] killed him...And he [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] became inside the city...when suddenly the one who sought his help the previous day cried out to him [once again]. Moses said to him, "Indeed, you are an evident, [persistent] deviator.”” And when he wanted to seize the one who was an enemy to both of them, he [the troublemaker] said, "O Moses, do you intend to kill me as you killed someone yesterday?...””*

Even though this man was fully aware that the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, did not intend to kill the Egyptian soldier in the first encounter yet he did not conceal this accident and instead publicly exposed the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever conceals the faults of a Muslim will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted, in both this world and the next. This is quite evident if one ponders over it. The people who are accustomed to exposing the faults of others are the ones whose faults are made public by Allah, the

Exalted. But the one who conceals the faults of others is considered by society as someone who has no obvious faults.

There are two types of people in respect to this advice. The first are those whose wrong actions are private meaning, this person does not commit sins openly nor exposes their sins in a boastful manner to others. If this person slips up and commits a sin which becomes known to others it should be veiled as long as this does not cause harm to others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 19:

*“Indeed, those who like that immorality should be spread [or publicized] among those who have believed will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter...”*

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to overlook the mistakes of those who strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4375.

The second type of person is the wicked one who commits sins openly and does not care about people finding out about them. In fact, they often boast about the sins they have committed to others. As they inspire others to act in an evil way exposing their faults in order to warn others does not contradict this Hadith. Nor will this person have their faults exposed by Allah, the Exalted, in return for exposing the faults of this wicked person, which is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn

Majah, number 2546, as long as they are exposing the faults of another for the correct reason.



## Sincerity to the Public

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 20:

*“And a man came from the farthest end of the city, running. He said, “O Moses, indeed the eminent ones are conferring over you [intending] to kill you, so leave [the city]; indeed, I am to you of the sincere advisors.””*

The fact that this man went out of his way and made his own life harder just to advise the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, indicates his sincerity to him. Muslims must follow in his footsteps by showing sincerity to others by going out of their way to help others according to their means.

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 general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one’s words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themselves.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themselves in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

*“...Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them...”*

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they

can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

*“...And do good as Allah has done good to you...”*

## Supporting Others

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 20:

*“And a man came from the farthest end of the city, running. He said, “O Moses...indeed, I am to you of the sincere advisors.””*

Unfortunately, some people experience tests and times of ease yet, do not change their character in a positive way. Even though, there are many possible causes only one will be discussed in this chapter.

In some cases, people do not change for the better because the people around them do not encourage them to do so. In fact, many people have this habit of only patting others on the back and telling them what they want to hear. They somehow believe this is the character of a good companion and friend. They falsely believe acting in this way is a sign of their deep love and respect for others. But this is completely incorrect as this behaviour only encourages one to continue with their attitude without improving it. There is nothing wrong with providing emotional comfort to others but a good friend will always kindly point out the ways in which their friend or relative can improve their character. This will in fact improve the quality and condition of their companion’s life in this world and in the next. While merely patting others on the back will only provide temporary comfort to them but in no way will it improve the situation or their character. The correct attitude is possible to achieve without disrespecting others. This is the duty of a person towards others

especially, their relatives. In reality, if a person's friend or relative dislikes their good advice then they do not value their relationship with them. A person should never let anything, such as a person's age, prevent them from speaking the truth and kindly advising them to change their attitude for the better. Even if it is one's own parents they should still fulfil this duty as this behaviour is the essence of treating them kindly. Simply staying quiet just because they are one's parents should not be the attitude of a person unless they know advising them will only lead to further problems for everyone.

A shoulder to cry on is only really useful when it leads to a person changing for the better. Even if a person's attitude in a particular situation is correct none the less there are always lessons they can learn from the situation, which should be pointed out to them by others.

To conclude, one must advise others to do good and turn away from evil and not only provide emotional support by simply patting others on the back. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*"...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression..."*

## Being Saved

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 21:

*“...He [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] said, "My Lord, save me from the wrongdoing people.”*

Even though Allah, the Exalted, is the one who saves people from negative effects a Muslim must play their part in fulfilling this supplication by actively avoiding bad company and influence.

Muslims should note that a major sign of true love is when one directs their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is because obedience leads to success and safety in both this world and in the hereafter. A person who does not desire safety and success for a person can never truly love them irrespective of what they claim or how they treat the other person. The same way a person becomes happy when their beloved obtains worldly success, like a job, they will also desire their beloved to obtain success in the hereafter. If a person does not care about another obtaining safety and success especially, in the next world then they do not love them.

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

Therefore, a Muslim should assess whether those in their life direct them towards Allah, the Exalted, or not. If they do then it is a clear sign of their love for them. If they do not then it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

*“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”*

## Hoping Correctly

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 22:

*"...he [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] said, "Perhaps my Lord will guide me to the sound way.""*

The Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, possessed true hope in Allah, the Exalted, as his hope was combined with the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails



to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

## Real Modesty

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 23:

*“And when he [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] came to the water [i.e., well] of Madyan, he found there a crowd of people watering [their flocks], and he found aside from them two women holding back [their flocks]. He said, "What is your circumstance?" They said, "We do not water until the [male] shepherds dispatch [their flocks]...””*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2458, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that showing true modesty to Allah, the Exalted, involves guarding the head and what it contains and to protect the stomach and what it contains and to remember death often. He concluded by declaring that whoever intends to seek the hereafter should leave the adornments of the material world.

This Hadith proves that modesty is something which extends beyond one's clothing. It is something which encompasses every aspect of one's life. Protecting the head includes guarding the tongue, eyes, ears and even the thoughts from sins and vain things. Even though, one may hide what they say and what they see from others but they cannot hide these things from Allah, the Exalted. So protecting these parts of the body is a sign of true modesty.

Guarding the stomach means one should avoid unlawful wealth and food. This will lead to the rejection of one's good deeds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

Finally, modesty includes giving priority to the hereafter over the excess of this material world. It is important to note, this includes taking from the material world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excess or extravagance as these are disliked by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 7 Al Araf, verse 31:

*“...and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.”*

The one who behaves in this manner according to the teachings of Islam will find that they adequately prepare for the hereafter and have plenty of time to enjoy the lawful pleasures of the world moderately.

## Acting Correctly

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 23-24:

*“And when he [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] came to the water [i.e., well] of Madyan, he found there a crowd of people watering [their flocks], and he found aside from them two women holding back [their flocks]. He said, "What is your circumstance?" They said, "We do not water until the shepherds dispatch [their flocks]; and our father is an old man." So he watered [their flocks] for them; then he went back to the shade...”*

This event indicates some important characteristics which Muslims should adopt. The first is that a Muslim should always take every opportunity to help others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. They should not belittle righteous deeds by believing Allah, the Exalted, only desires Muslims to perform big righteous deeds. This negative attitude is a trick of the Devil which Muslims must avoid. Every righteous deed is significant according to the teachings of Islam. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342, advises that Allah, the Exalted, will give a reward the size of a mountain to the one who donates even a single date fruit for His pleasure. There are many other Hadiths indicating the significance of small deeds. Even the Holy Quran has made it clear that every atom's worth of good will be recorded and rewarded. Chapter 99 Az Zalzalah, verse 7:

*“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it.”*

Muslims should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, and help others according to their means. At the time he possessed nothing else to offer the women except his physical strength so he used it in order to help them instead of disregarding the deed believing it was a small and therefore insignificant deed.

In addition, this event proves the significance of small good deeds as this deed led to him meeting and living with the Holy Prophet Shoaib, peace be upon him.

The other good characteristic indicated in this great event is sincerity. The Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was in a desperate condition yet, did not desire or request payment from the women as he acted for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Muslims should never desire or request payback for the favours they do to others as this proves their insincerity meaning, they did not act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Insincerity only wastes the reward one could have gained from Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

## **A Humble Supplication**

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 24:

*"...then he went back to the shade and said, "My Lord, indeed I am, for whatever good You would send down to me, in need."*

This supplication of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, teaches Muslims the importance of humility. This pious characteristic allows a Muslim to acknowledge with their heart and through their actions that every blessing they possess has been granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted. The Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, confirmed in this supplication that all good in this world and the next is granted by Allah, the Exalted. But more importantly even though it is a fact that nothing in creation occurs without the will and choice of Allah, the Exalted, which includes difficulties and hardships, it is a sign of true servanthood not to attribute these things to Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, mentioned the good things Allah, the Exalted, chose for him but did not mention the great difficulty he was in which occurred through the will and choice of Allah, the Exalted, as this behaviour can be seen as a type of complaint. The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, did the same thing when he attributed good things to Allah, the Exalted, yet attributed illness to himself even though illnesses only occur through the choice and will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 80:

*“And when I am ill, it is He who cures me.”*

This attitude is important to adopt as it makes one's mentality positive rather than negative. The one who adopts a negative mentality will only ever observe and mention their problems instead of observing the countless blessings they still possess which leads to impatience and further difficulties. Whereas, the one who possesses a positive mind-set will only ever observe and mention the countless blessings they possess in all situations which leads to patience and true gratitude which is shown by the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, in this great event. It is important to firmly believe that the glass is half full not half empty.

## Gratitude to People

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 25:

*“...She said, "Indeed, my father invites you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] that he may reward you for having watered for us."...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though there is no doubt that the source of all blessings is none other than Allah, the Exalted, none the less showing gratitude to people is an important aspect of Islam. This is because Allah, the Exalted, sometimes uses a person as a means to help others such as one's parents. As the means has been created and used by Allah, the Exalted, being grateful to them is in fact being grateful to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims must show good character and always show appreciation for any aid or support they receive from others irrespective of its size. They should show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessing according to His commands as He is the source of the blessing and show gratitude to the person as they are the means which was created and chosen by Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should show gratitude verbally to people and practically by repaying their act of kindness according to their means even if it is only a supplication on



their behalf. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 216.

The person who does not show gratitude to people cannot show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore they will not be given an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

If a Muslim desires an increase in blessings they must fulfill both aspects of gratitude namely, to Allah, the Exalted, and to people.

## Financial Business

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 26:

*“One of the women said, “O my father, hire him [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him]...””*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings of Islam. In respect to business dealings a Muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when Muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes not striving to con others by making them pay excessively for goods. A Muslim should simply treat others how they

desire to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way, a Muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters they should not mistreat others.

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

## Being Strong

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 26:

*“One of the women said, “O my father, hire him. Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong...””*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4168, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the strong believer is more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, than a weaker believer.

This does not necessarily refer to physical strength which one uses to perform righteous deeds. But it also refers to knowledge and acting on it. When one acts on their knowledge it leads to certainty of faith. The one who possesses strong faith will fulfil their duties according to their knowledge and not blind imitation like the weak believer. A weak believer believes something based on hearsay like if they were told a person is inside their house whereas the strong believer believes and acts based on knowledge for example, if they saw the person inside their house through a window. The stronger one's faith the greater their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This in turn increases their success in both worlds. 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...”*

## **Upholding Trusts**

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 26:

*“One of the women said, “O my father, hire him. Indeed, the best one you can hire is the...trustworthy.””*

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.

## **Create Ease for Others**

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 27:

*“...And I do not wish to put you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] in difficulty. You will find me, if Allah wills, from among the righteous.”*

This incident clearly connects being righteous with making things easy for others.

In this day and age due to ignorance it has become more difficult to fulfil the rights of people, such as one's parents. Even though a Muslim has no excuse but to strive to fulfil them it is important for Muslims to be merciful with each other. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6655, Allah, the Exalted, shows mercy to those who are merciful to others.

One aspect of this mercy is for a Muslim not to demand their full rights from others. Instead, they should use the means such as their physical or financial strength to help themselves and make things easy for others. In some cases, when a Muslim demands their full rights from others and they fail to fulfil them it may lead to their punishment. In order to be merciful to others they should therefore only demand their rights in some



cases. This does not mean a Muslim should not strive to fulfil the rights of others but it means they should try to overlook and excuse the people they have rights over. For example, a parent can excuse their adult child from a particular house chore and do it themselves if they possess the means to do so without troubling themselves, especially if their child returns home from work exhausted. This leniency and mercy will not only cause Allah, the Exalted, to be more merciful to them but it will also increase the love and respect people have for them. The one who always demands their full rights is not a sinner but they will lose out on this reward and outcome if they behave in this manner.

Muslims should make things easy for others and hope Allah, the Exalted, will make things easy for them in this world and in the next.

## **Dominance**

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 35:

*“...[It will be] through Our signs; you [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] and those who follow you will be the predominant.”*

Meaning, those who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, will always gain superiority in both worlds.

Even though the number of Muslims have increased over time it is obvious that the strength of Muslims has only decreased. Each Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith believes in the authenticity of the Holy Quran as doubting it would cause them to lose their faith. In the following verse Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to obtaining superiority and success which would remove the weakness and grief Muslims are experiencing all around the world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

*“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”*

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Muslims only need to become true believers in order to achieve this superiority and success in both worlds. True belief involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, 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 includes the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and those towards people, such as loving for others what one loves for themselves which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This requires one to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Through this attitude was success and superiority granted to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And if Muslims desire to achieve it then they must return to this rightly guided attitude. As Muslims believe in the Holy Quran they should understand this simple teaching and act on it.

## **Avoid Blind Imitation**

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 36:

*“But when Moses came to them with Our signs as clear evidences, they said, “...we have not heard of this [religion] among our forefathers.””*

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

*“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”*

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five

daily obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.

## Failure

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 37:

*“And Moses said, “...Indeed, wrongdoers do not succeed.””*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2447, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that oppression will become a darkness on the Day of Judgment.

This is vital to avoid as those who find themselves plunged in darkness are unlikely to find their way to Paradise. Only those who will be provided a guiding light will be able to do this successfully.

Oppression can take many forms. The first type is when one fails to fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. Even though this has no effect on the infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, it will cause the person to become submerged into darkness in both worlds. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, whenever a person commits a sin a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. The more they sin the more their heart will become encompassed by darkness. This will prevent them from accepting and following true guidance in this world which will ultimately lead to darkness in the next world. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

*“No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning.”*

The next type of oppression is when one oppresses themselves by not fulfilling the trust they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, in the form of their body and other worldly blessings they possess. The greatest of which is one's faith. This must be protected and strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

The final type of oppression is when one mistreats others. Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive these sins until the oppressor's victim forgives them first. As people are not so merciful this is unlikely to happen. Then justice will be established on Judgment Day where the oppressor's righteous deeds will be given to their victim and if necessary the victim's sins will be given to the oppressor. This may lead to the oppressor being hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. One should therefore treat others how they wish to be treated by people. A Muslim should avoid all forms of oppression if they desire a guiding light in this world and in the next.

## Remembering the Return

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 39:

*“And he [Pharaoh] was arrogant, he and his soldiers, in the land, without right, and they thought that they would not be returned to Us.”*

Failing to remember that one will eventually return to Allah, the Exalted, and be held accountable for all their deeds leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, such as wronging others.

It is important for Muslims to regularly assess their own deeds. As no one except Allah, the Exalted, is better aware of them than themselves. When one honestly judges their own deeds it will inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins and encourage them towards righteous deeds. But the one who fails to regularly assess their deeds will lead a life of heedlessness whereby they commit sins without sincerely repenting. This person will find the weighing of their deeds on the Day of Judgment extremely difficult. In fact, it may well cause them to be hurled into Hell.

A clever business owner will always regularly assess their accounts. This will ensure their business heads in the right direction and ensures they complete all the necessary accounts such as a tax return correctly.



But the foolish business owner will not regularly take accounts of their business. This will lead to a loss in profits and a failure in correctly preparing for their accounts. Those who fail to file their accounts correctly with the government face penalties which only makes their lives more difficult. But the key thing to note is that the penalty of failing to correctly assess and prepare one's deeds for the Scales of Judgment Day does not involve a monetary fine. Its penalty is more severe and truly unbearable. Chapter 99 Az Zalzalah, verses 7-8:

*“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.”*

## **A Cursed Life**

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 42:

*“And We caused to overtake them [Pharaoh and his people] in this world a curse...”*

A curse removes the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, from a person. This can occur when one persists on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, Muslims must strive to avoid this outcome by striving to sincerely obey 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.

## **Beware of Comfort**

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 76:

*“Indeed, Qarun was from the people of Moses, but he tyrannized them. And We gave him of treasures whose keys would burden a band of strong men; thereupon his people said to him, "Do not exult. Indeed, Allah does not like the exultant.””*

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

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

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

## Using Means Correctly

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 76-77:

*“Indeed, Qarun was from the people of Moses, but he tyrannized them. And We gave him of treasures whose keys would burden a band of strong men; thereupon his people said to him, “...But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world...””*

Every worldly blessing a Muslim possesses is only a means which should aid them in reaching the hereafter safely. It is not an end in itself. For example, wealth is a means one should use in order to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, fulfilling their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. It is not an end or an ultimate goal in itself.

This not only aids a Muslim in maintaining their focus on the hereafter but it also aids them whenever they lose worldly blessings. When a Muslim treats each worldly blessing, such as a child, as a means to please Allah, the Exalted, and reach the hereafter safely then losing it will not have such a detrimental impact on them. They may become sad, which is an acceptable emotion, but they will not become grieved which leads to impatience and other mental problems, such as depression. This is because they firmly believe the worldly blessing they possessed was only a means so losing it does not cause a loss in the ultimate goal

namely, Paradise, the loss of which is disastrous. Therefore, still possessing and concentrating on the ultimate goal will prevent them from becoming grieved.

In addition, they will understand that just like the thing they lost was only a means they firmly believe they will be provided with another means to reach and fulfil their ultimate goal by Allah, the Exalted. This will also prevent them from grieving. Whereas, the one who believes their worldly blessing is the end instead of a means will experience severe grief when losing it as their whole purpose and objective has been lost. This grief will lead to depression and other mental issues.

To conclude, Muslims should treat each blessing they possess as a means to reach the hereafter safely not as an end in itself. This is how one can possess things without being possessed by them. This is how they can keep worldly things in their hands and not in their hearts.

## Receiving Good

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 76-77:

*“Indeed, Qarun was from the people of Moses, but he tyrannized them. And We gave him of treasures whose keys would burden a band of strong men; thereupon his people said to him, “...And do good as Allah has done good to you...””*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that Allah, the Exalted, will not show mercy to the one who does not show mercy to others.

Islam is a very simple religion. One of its fundamental teachings is so simple that even uneducated people can understand and act on them namely, how people treat others is how they will be treated by Allah, the Exalted. For example, those who learn to overlook and forgive the mistakes of others will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

*“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”*



Those who support others in beneficial worldly and religious matters such as emotional or financial aid will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893. This same Hadith advises that the one who conceals the faults of others will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, if one treats others with kindness and respect according to the teachings of Islam they will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted. And those who mistreat others will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted, even if they fulfill the obligatory duties which are connected to Him such as the obligatory prayers. This is because a Muslim must fulfill both duties in order to achieve success namely, the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Finally, it is important to note a Muslim will only be treated kindly by Allah, the Exalted, if they treat others kindly for His sake. If they do it for any other reason than they will undoubtedly forfeit the reward mentioned in these teachings. The foundation of all acts and Islam itself is one's intention. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

## Avoid Corruption

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 76-77:

*"Indeed, Qarun was from the people of Moses, but he tyrannized them. And We gave him of treasures whose keys would burden a band of strong men; thereupon his people said to him, "...And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters."*

Corruption is when a person abuses the blessings they possess, especially their social influence, in order to gain worldly things, such as power and wealth. It affects a Muslim's duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and leads to much sins against people, such as oppression.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, warns that when the general public cheats each other financially Allah, the Exalted, punishes them by appointing oppressive leaders over them. One aspect of this oppression is corruption which causes the general public great distress. The same Hadith warns that when the general public break their covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then they will be overpowered by their enemies who will illegally confiscate their wealth and property from them. Again, this is an aspect of corruption where people of influence, such as government officials, freely take the belongings of others without any fear of the consequences. When the general public becomes corrupt then their leaders and other people in influential social positions are inspired to act in the same way believing

this behaviour is accepted by the general public. This leads to corruption on a national level. But if the general public obeyed Allah, the Exalted, and avoided mistreating others through corruption then their leaders and those in an influential social position would not dare act in a corrupt way full well knowing the general public would not stand for it. And according to the Hadith quoted earlier, if the general public remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, He would protect them from corrupt officials by appointing people into influential positions who are just in their affairs.

Instead of taking the immature path of blaming others for the widespread corruption observed in the world Muslims should truly reflect on their own behaviour and if necessary adjust their attitude. Otherwise, corruption in society will only increase with the passing of time. No one should believe that as they are not in an influential social position they have no effect on the corruption which occurs in society. As proven by this discussion corruption occurs because of the negative behaviour of the general public and it therefore can only be removed by the good behaviour of the general public. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

*“...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...”*

## Accomplishments

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 76-78:

*“Indeed, Qarun was from the people of Moses, but he tyrannized them. And We gave him of treasures whose keys would burden a band of strong men; thereupon his people said to him, “...And do good as Allāh has done good to you...”...He said, “I was only given it because of knowledge I have.”...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a person who possesses even an atom’s worth of pride in their heart will not enter Paradise. He clarified that pride is when a person rejects the truth and looks down on others.

No amount of good deeds will benefit someone who possesses pride. This is quite obvious when one observes the Devil and how his countless years of worship did not benefit him when he became proud. In fact, the following verse clearly connects pride with disbelief so a Muslim must avoid this evil characteristic at all costs. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

*“And [mention] when We said to the angels, “Prostrate before Adam”; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers.”*

The proud is the one who rejects the truth when it is presented to them simply because it did not come from them and as it challenges their desires and mentality. The proud person also believes they are superior to others even though they are unaware of their own ultimate end and the ultimate end of others. This is plain ignorance. In reality, it is foolish to be proud of anything seeing as Allah, the Exalted, created and granted everything a person owns. Even the righteous deeds one performs are only due to the inspiration, knowledge and strength granted by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, being proud of something which does not innately belong to them is plain foolishness. This is just like a person who becomes proud over a mansion they do not even own or live in.

This is the reason why pride belongs to Allah, the Exalted, as He alone is the Creator and innate Owner of all things. The one who challenges Allah, the Exalted, in pride will be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4090.

A Muslim should instead follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and adopt humility. The humble truly recognise that all the good they possess and all the evil they are protected from comes from no one except Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, humility is more fitting for a person than pride. A person should not be fooled into believing humility leads to disgrace as no one has been more honoured than the humble servants of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him,

has guaranteed an increase in status for the one who adopts humility for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029.

## Real Success

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-80:

*“So he [Qarun – a man from the people of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qarun. Indeed, he is one of great fortune.” But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allāh is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient.””*

This event reminds Muslims that greatness and true success is not connected to worldly things, such as wealth or fame. A person may obtain some worldly success through these things but it is quite obvious if one turns the pages of history that this type of success is very temporary and it eventually becomes a burden and regret for a person. A Muslim should never believe that superiority lies in these things thereby dedicating themselves to obtaining them while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Nor should they look down at others who do not possess these worldly things believing they have no value or significance as this attitude contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6071, that the people of Paradise are those who are considered insignificant by society and concluded that if they took an oath on something Allah, the Exalted, would fulfil it for them.

True honour, success and greatness in this world and the next only lies in piety. So the more one sincerely strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the greater they are even if they appear insignificant to society. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A Muslim should therefore search for true success in this and not waste their time and efforts in searching for it in worldly things otherwise they may well reach the hereafter a great loser. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

*“Say, “Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.””*



## Observing Others

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81:

*“So he [Qarun – a man from the people of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qarun. Indeed, he is one of great fortune.” But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allāh is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient.” And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home...”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4142, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to observe those who possess less worldly things than them instead of those who possess more as this will prevent them from becoming ungrateful.

Unfortunately, some incorrectly observe the lives of others which appear to be better than their own life. For example, normal people often observe celebrities and mistakenly believe their life is better. In most cases, this concept is not true. As people who appear to be in a better situation may well be facing difficulties which would make others not wish to trade places with them. An outsider will only observe things from one point of view. But if they could see the whole story they would realise everyone faces problems and no one has the perfect life

irrespective of what their own or how famous they are. Often this misconception is caused by the media. But people fail to remember that the aim of the media is to paint a certain picture of the lives of celebrities which look appealing to read about. In most cases, if they only reported facts without sugar coating them the majority of their customers would turn away from them.

Muslims must avoid this false belief as it is a tool of the Devil who uses it to inspire people to become ungrateful over what they possess. The correct mind-set which has been advised in this Hadith will prevent one becoming ungrateful to Allah, the Exalted. Whenever a Muslim feels ungrateful they should shift their focus to the countless people who are living in severe poverty and facing much greater hardships than them.

The grass is not greener on the other side of the fence it is in fact green enough on one's own side. 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.”*

## Expander and Contractor

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 82:

*"[the people of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said]... "Oh, how Allah extends provision to whom He wills of His servants and restricts it!..."*

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

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

Therefore, the Muslim who understands this divine name will be grateful for whatever situation they are experiencing knowing it is best for them and in each case they will adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. During times of contraction they will remain patient and in times of expansion they will remain grateful. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the one who behaves in this manner will always obtain blessings in all situations.

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

## **Patience Leads to Superiority**

The next discussion is based on chapter 32 As Sajdah, verses 23-24:

*“And We certainly gave Moses the Scripture...And We made it [i.e., the Torah] guidance for the Children of Israel. And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were patient...”*

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

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

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

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

A patient Muslim understands that anything which effected them, such as a difficulty, could not have been avoided even if the entire creation aided them. Similarly, whatever missed them could not have affected them. The one who truly accepts this fact will not exult and grow proud over anything they obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, allocated that thing to them. Nor will they grieve over anything which they fail to obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, did not allocate that thing to them and nothing in existence can alter this fact. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

*“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register<sup>1</sup> before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allah, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you...”*

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

even supplicates for it but they do not complain about what has occurred. Being persistently patient can lead a Muslim to a greater level namely, contentment.

The one who is content does not desire things to change as they know the choice of Allah, the Exalted, is better than their choice. This Muslim firmly believes and acts on the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. It advises that every situation is best for the believer. If they encounter a problem they should show patience which leads to blessings. And if they experience times of ease they should show gratitude which also leads to blessings.

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

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

A Muslim will never reach full contentment until their behaviour is equal in times of difficulty and ease. How can a true servant go to the Master

namely, Allah, the Exalted, for a judgment and then become unhappy if the choice does not match their desire. There is a real possibility that if a person gets what they desire it will destroy them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

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

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

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



In addition, a Muslim should review the many verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the reward given to the patient and content Muslim. Deep reflection on this will inspire a Muslim to remain steadfast when facing difficulties. For example, Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

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

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

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

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

## **Certainty Leads to Superiority**

The next discussion is based on chapter 32 As Sajdah, verses 23-24:

*“And We certainly gave Moses the Scripture...And We made it [i.e., the Torah] guidance for the Children of Israel. And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were...certain of Our signs [certainty of faith].”*

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...”*

## **Slandering and Backbiting**

The next discussion is based on chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 69:

*“O you who have believed, be not like those who abused Moses; then Allah cleared him of what they said...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6593, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of backbiting and slander.

Backbiting is when one criticizes someone behind their back in a way which would be displeasing to them even though it is the truth. Whereas, slander is similar to backbiting except that the statement is not true. These sins mainly involve speech but can include other things, such as using hand signals. These are major sins and backbiting has been compared to eating the flesh of a dead corpse in the Holy Quran. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

*“...And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it...”*

It is important to understand that these sins are worse than most of the sins which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted. This is because the sins between a person and Allah, the Exalted, will be forgiven by Him if the sinner sincerely repents. But Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive a backbiter or a slanderer until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then on Judgment day the good deeds of the backbiter/slanderer will be given to their victim as compensation and if needed the sins of the victim will be given to their backbiter/slanderer until justice is established. This may well cause the backbiter/slanderer to be hurled into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

The only times backbiting is lawful is if one is warning and protecting another person of harm or if a person is resolving a complaint against another with a third party, such as a legal case.

One should avoid backbiting and slandering by firstly gaining knowledge on the evil consequences of these major sins. Secondly, a person should only utter words which they would happily say in front of the person full well knowing they would not take it in an offensive way. Thirdly, a Muslim should only utter words about another if they would not mind someone else saying those or similar words about them. Meaning, they should talk about others how they want people to talk about them. Finally, a Muslim should concentrate on fixing their own faults and when done sincerely it will prevent them from backbiting and slandering others.



## The Honorable

The next discussion is based on chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 69:

*“...And he [Prophet Musa, peace be upon him] in the sight of Allah, was distinguished.”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4119, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the best people are those who remind others of Allah, the Exalted, when they are observed.

This does not refer to those who adopt an Islamic outward appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf, as many of these people do not remind others of Allah, the Exalted, at all. This Hadith refers to those who learn and act on Islamic knowledge so that they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the purification of one's heart which leads to the purification of their outward limbs. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984. This will cause others to remember Allah, the Exalted, when they observe these righteous Muslims. And this remembrance will only increase when these righteous Muslims speak as they only speak in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they avoid evil and vain speech and only speak on beneficial matters in

respect to the world and the hereafter. This remembrance further increases when one observes their actions as they practically implement the teachings of Islam thereby, acting only in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. For example, they love, dislike, give and withhold only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

## **Real Muslim and Believer**

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verses 120-122:

*“Peace upon Moses...”...Indeed, they were of Our believing servants.”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true Muslim and a true believer. A true Muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A Muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a Muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a Muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

## Faith Beings Peace

The next discussion is based on chapter 40 Ghafir, verses 26-27:

*“And Pharaoh said, "Let me kill Moses...But Moses said, "Indeed, I have sought refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant one who does not believe in the Day of Account.””*

The Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, specifically highlighted disbelieving in the Day of Judgement in order to indicate that one only avoids sins and crimes by controlling their actions and speech after they truly believe in being held accountable for their deeds.

Unfortunately, there are some who claim that faith is not required in this world and others who are Muslims claim it is enough to profess Islam without supporting it with sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. But the increase in crimes within society proves the importance of faith and strengthening it through knowledge and action. This is because crimes and sins only occur as a person feels they will either face no consequences for their actions, such as prison, or they will somehow escape them for example, by fleeing the country. But the person who believes that no matter what action they perform, whether open or secret, big or small, and no matter what tricks they attempt a day will undoubtedly come where they will be held accountable for all their deeds will always think twice before committing a crime or a sin. If this belief is strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge it will

deter one from committing crimes and sins. If people acted in this way peace and justice would spread across society. The crime rate would decrease and the times would closely match the times of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his rightly guided Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them. This fact alone indicates the importance of faith and strengthening it through gaining and acting on knowledge within society. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 90:

*“Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving [help] to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.”*

## Standing Against Evil

The next discussion is based on chapter 40 Ghafir, verses 26-28:

*“And Pharaoh said, "Let me kill Moses...And a believing man from the family of Pharaoh who concealed his faith said, "Do you kill a man [merely] because he says, 'My Lord is Allāh' while he has brought you clear proofs from your Lord?...””*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised the importance of objecting to evil things in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4340. This Hadith clearly shows that it is a duty on all Muslims to object to all forms of evil according to their strength and means. The lowest level, as mentioned in this Hadith, is rejecting the evil with one's heart.

This shows internally approving evil actions is one of the ugliest of those things which are forbidden. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4345, that the one who is present when an evil is committed and denounces it is like the one who was not present. But the one who was absent and approved the evil deed is like the one who was present when it was committed.

The first two aspects of objecting to evil, mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion, are through one's physical actions and speech. This is only a duty on a Muslim who has the strength to do so for example, they will not be harmed by their actions or words.

It is important to note, objecting to evil with one's hand does not refer to fighting. It refers to correcting the evil actions of others, such as returning the rights of someone which have been unlawfully violated. The one who is in a position to do so yet, refrains from doing so has been warned of a punishment in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4338.

The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised Muslims in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2191, that they should not fear the creation in respect to speaking the truth. In fact, the one who allows the fear of the creation to prevent them from objecting to evil things has been described as the one who hates themselves and will be criticized by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4008. It is important to note, this does not refer to the one who remains silent out of fear of being harmed as this is an acceptable excuse but it refers to the person who remains silent because of the status people hold in their eyes.

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4341, advises that a person can give up objecting to evil things through their actions and speech when others obey their greed, follow their incorrect opinions and desires and when they prefer the material world over the hereafter. It does not take a scholar to conclude this time has arrived. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 105.



*“O you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided...”*

But it is important to note, a Muslim should continue with this important duty in respect to their dependents as this is a duty on them according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928, and in respect to those they feel physically and verbally safe from, as this is the superior attitude.

Objecting to evil things which are apparent is what the main Hadith under discussion refers to. Meaning, it does not grant permission to Muslims to spy on others in order to find evil things to object to. Spying and anything associated with it in this respect are forbidden. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

*“O you who have believed...do not spy...”*

It is important to note, that a Muslim must object to evil according to the teachings of Islam and not their own desires. A Muslim may believe they are acting for sake of Allah, the Exalted, when they are not. This is proven when they object to evil in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, what is considered a good deed may well become a sin because of this negative attitude.

A Muslim must object to evil in a gentle and fair way preferably in private in accordance to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The opposite of these characteristics will only push people away from sincerely repenting and may lead to further sins as a result of angering them.

## **Remain on the Path**

The next discussion is based on chapter 40 Ghafir, verses 26-28:

*“And Pharaoh said, “Let me kill Moses...And a believing man from the family of Pharaoh who concealed his faith said, “Do you kill a man [merely] because he says, “My Lord is Allah”...””*

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.”*

## Always Consequences

The next discussion is based on chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 29:

*“[A follower of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said] O my people, sovereignty is yours today, [your being] dominant in the land. But who would protect us from the punishment of Allāh if it came to us?”...*”

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A Muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a Muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.



## Being Cautious

The next discussion is based on chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 37:

*“...And thus was made attractive to Pharaoh the evil of his deed, and he was averted from the [right] way...”*

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.

## Failures

The next discussion is based on chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 44:

*“[A follower of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said] And you will remember what I [now] say [as a warning] to you...”*

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?”*

## **Garden or Pit**

The next discussion is based on chapter 40 Ghafir, verses 45-46:

*“...and the people of Pharaoh were enveloped by the worst of punishment. The Fire; they are exposed to it morning and evening...”*

These verses indicate the punishment of the grave. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2460, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a grave is either a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hell. This Hadith further explains that when a successful believer is placed in their grave it widens and becomes comfortable for them whereas, the grave of a sinful person becomes extremely constricted and harmful for them.

It is important to note, that in reality each person takes the garden of Paradise or pit of Hell with them when they depart this world namely, their deeds. If a Muslim obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then it will ensure they prepare the deeds required to make their grave a garden of Paradise. But if they disobey Allah, the Exalted, then their sins will create the pit of Hell they will rest in until the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, Muslims must act today and not delay in this preparation as the time of death is unknown and often comes suddenly. Delaying to a tomorrow one may not see is foolish and it only leads to regrets. The same way a person spends much energy and time beautifying their home in this world they must strive harder in beautifying their grave as the journey there is inevitable and the stay there long. And if one suffers in their grave then what follows will only be worse. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4267.

## **Inheriting the Book**

The next discussion is based on chapter 40 Ghafir, verses 53-54:

*“And We had certainly given Moses guidance, and We caused the Children of Israel to inherit the Scripture [Torah]. As guidance and a reminder for those of understanding.”*

The children of Israel failed to live up to the Torah they inherited from the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. Muslims have similarly inherited the Holy Quran and they therefore must learn and act on it so that they avoid following in the footsteps of the children of Israel.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to



understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a Muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true Muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

## Creating Doubt

The next discussion is based on chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 45:

*“And We had already given Moses the Scripture, but it came under disagreement...And indeed they are, concerning it in disquieting doubt.”*

The Torah came under disagreement as it was altered by people and as some abandoned its teachings.

Those who failed to act on the Torah assumed that abandoning knowledge and learning a few practices from their religion was enough for salvation. They turned their religion into a few empty practices and failed to understand that their faith was meant to affect every word they utter and every action they perform. This realization can only take place when one strives to gain and act on religious knowledge. Unfortunately, many Muslims have followed in their footsteps and rely on a few physical acts of worship assuming this is the path of success. When one turns their faith into a few practices and rituals performed in a language they do not even understand their faith stops becoming a way of life. When the next generation follow in their footsteps it is only a matter of time before they abandon these few practices assuming that they are only a part of their culture instead of realizing their faith is meant to be a way of life. For example, the elders which migrated to western countries held onto their culture in respect to the clothes they wore but the next generation who were born and raised in the west abandoned this way of

dressing assuming it was only a cultural practice and not a way of life. The issue with culture and fashion is that they are always changing from generation to generation and if faith is seen as a few cultural practices it too will be abandoned with the passing of time. If one turns the pages of history they will observe that this is what occurred with the people of the book, the Jews and Christians. Once upon a time their synagogues and churches were full of worshippers and students of knowledge but when the people abandoned knowledge and instead adopted a few practices the next generation went a step further and even abandoned these few practices and as a result their synagogues and churches became empty.

In addition, those who adopted this mentality amongst the older generation held onto the few practices they learned but due to changes in the general mentality of society the next generation no longer desire to blindly follow practices and often question why they should adopt faith and act on these practices. If the older generation are unaware of why they are Muslims then how can they explain this to the next generation? Ignorance will only encourage the next generation to abandon their faith and the few practices they were taught by their elders and to instead lead a life serving their own desires.

If Muslims do not change their attitude by devoting themselves to gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge and encourage the next generation to do the same then they too will share the fate of the people of the book mentioned in this verse.

## Wisdom Behind Events

The next discussion is based on chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 48:

*“...and We seized them [Pharaoh’s people] with affliction that perhaps they might return [and act rightly].”*

Often when Muslims receive blessings especially, beyond their need, it distracts them from the hereafter and instead focuses their minds on this material world. So in this respect, the wisdom behind a difficulty is to refocus a Muslim’s attention on what is truly important which is preparing for the hereafter. This is like a person who is so preoccupied with their phone that they cross a road without seeing an oncoming vehicle. Another person violently pulls them away from the oncoming car which causes them distress yet, saves their life. Even though being pulled violently causes distress and even pain but it is only done in order to refocus their attention on the life threatening danger namely, the oncoming car. Similarly, a Muslim faces emotional and physical difficulties in order to refocus their attention on more important things such as the hereafter. If a Muslim was left to only face times of ease without difficulties there is no doubt that they would become lost in enjoying the excess of this material world. This neglect in the long run would be disastrous for them. So they face a small difficulty in order to protect them from greater difficulties namely, the difficulties of the hereafter. Therefore, Muslims should remember this truth every time they face a difficulty so that they leave the difficulty refocused on more important things and act correctly over this blessing instead of demonstrating impatience and heedlessness to this vital benefit. This is in fact one of the biggest favours of Allah, the Exalted.

## Facing Times of Ease

The next discussion is based on chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verses 49-50:

*“And they said [to Prophet Musa, peace be upon him], “O magician, invoke for us your Lord by what He has promised you. Indeed, we will be guided.”” But when We removed from them the affliction, at once they broke their word.”*

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

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

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

## A Warning

The next discussion is based on chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verses 55-56:

*“And when they [Pharaoh’s people] angered Us, We took retribution from them and drowned them all. And We made them a precedent and an example for the later peoples.”*

It is important for a Muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a Muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like

the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A Muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

*"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""*

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.



## **Be Neutral**

The next discussion is based on chapter 44 Ad Dukhan, verse 21:

*"[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said to Pharaoh] But if you do not believe me, then leave me alone."*

Muslims often claim that as they are very busy in their worldly activities they find it difficult to do voluntary righteous deeds especially, those related to people, such as physically supporting someone. Even though Muslims should strive to perform as much voluntary righteous deeds as possible as it will benefit them in both worlds whereas, their worldly activities will only benefit them in this world none the less, the least these Muslims should do is adopt a neutral mentality towards others. This means that if a Muslim cannot help others they should not hinder them in their lawful and good activities. If they cannot make others happy they should not make them sad. If they cannot make others laugh they should not make them cry. This can be applied to countless scenarios. This is important to understand as many Muslims might do good to others, such as provide them emotional support, but at the same time they destroy their good deeds by being negative towards people. It is important to note, if a Muslim is excessive in being negative towards others it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Having a neutral mentality is actually a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250.

To conclude, it is best to treat others in a positive way which is a sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. But if they cannot do this the least they should do is treat others in a neutral way. As treating others in a negative way may well lead to one's destruction.

## **Insincerity to Prophethood**

The next discussion is based on chapter 61 As Saf, verse 5:

*“And when Moses said to his people, “O my people, why do you harm me while you certainly know that I am the messenger of Allah to you?” And when they deviated, Allah caused their hearts to deviate. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.”*

The children of Israel harmed the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, by failing to sincerely obey and follow him and as a result they deviated from the correct path. Muslims must avoid following in their footsteps if they desire right guidance by sincerely obeying and following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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 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.

## Gifts or Giver

The next discussion is based on chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 11:

*“And Allah presents an example of those who believed: the wife of Pharaoh, when she said, “My Lord, build for me near You a house in Paradise...””*

It is important to note that the wife of Pharaoh desired the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, over Paradise.

It is important for Muslims to understand a key concept in Islam. Namely, there is nothing wrong with desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, but it is best to avoid worshipping and obeying Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain them. This is because these types of Muslims often only worship Allah, the Exalted, and inhabit the Mosques when they desire worldly things. But if they do not receive them they become impatient and fed up which causes them to stop obeying Allah, the Exalted. Or if they obtain them then the joy of them often makes them turn away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as they believe they achieved what they desired therefore there is no need to obey Allah, the Exalted, anymore. These Muslims worship Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they obey Allah, the Exalted, only when it suits their desires. And because of this attitude they are in danger of becoming misguided. 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.”*

These Muslims may claim that they are worshipping Allah, the Exalted, but in reality, they are only worshipping their own desires and the gifts and blessings they receive.

It is praiseworthy to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain religious blessings, such as Paradise, as this has been recommended by Islamic teachings. But it is far superior to worship Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One worthy of it and because the creation are His servants.

If a Muslim must desire gifts and blessings then it is best to aim for religious blessings as aiming for worldly blessings can shift a person's intention so that they end up worshipping the gift instead of the Giver.

## Purification Leads to Success

The next discussion is based on chapter 79 An Naziat, verses 15-18:

*“Has there reached you the story of Moses? "Go to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed. And say to him, 'Would you [be willing to] purify yourself.'”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.



Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

## **An Evil Environment**

The next discussion is based on chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 9:

*“And the wife of Pharaoh said, “[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, will be] a comfort of the eye [i.e., pleasure] for me and for you. Do not kill him; perhaps he may benefit us, or we may adopt him as a son.” And they perceived not.”*

This event indicates the importance of remaining steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, even when one is exposed to a non-Islamic environment. In the case of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, it is widely known that he was raised in the palace of Pharaoh. One can imagine the evil practices which took place there yet, the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was unaffected by them and still adhered to noble character throughout his life. Even though, he was divinely protected from being negatively influenced Muslims must follow in his footsteps. In this day and age Muslims have spread across the world and have integrated with different societies and cultures. Even though, Islam teaches Muslims to respect the cultures and opinions of other communities yet, they must adhere to the teachings of Islam instead of adopting customs which contradict its teachings. Unfortunately, as many Muslims did not remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam when they integrated with other societies they adopted their customs and fused them with the teachings of Islam to such a degree that many of these Muslims do not know the difference between Islamic practices and non-Islamic practices. One only needs to observe most of the modern day Muslim weddings to understand this

fact. The same way the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, did not adopt the practices of the family of Pharaoh while being raised in his palace Muslims must adhere to the teachings of Islam irrespective of where they live. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who journeyed to strange lands yet, always adhered to the teachings of Islam.

It is important to note, as proven by history the more a Muslim adopts non-Islamic practices the less they will act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This attitude only leads to misguidance.

## **A Lesson in Gratitude**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 61:

*“And [recall] when you said, “O Moses, we can never endure one [kind of] food. So call upon your Lord to bring forth for us from the earth its green herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions.” [Moses] said, “Would you exchange what is better for what is less? Go into [any] settlement and indeed, you will have what you have asked.” And they were covered with humiliation and poverty and returned with anger from Allah [upon them]...”*

A Muslim should never fail to show appreciation and gratitude for what they have been given by Allah, the Exalted. Just like the people of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, many Muslims today believe what they possess is inferior to what they desire to possess. As they were clearly wrong for desiring something else so are the Muslims today. It is the tradition of Allah, the Exalted, to always choose the best for His servants and it is up to them to either increase their blessings through true gratitude or invite the punishment of Allah, the Exalted, by showing ingratitude. Muslims should remember they are extremely short sighted and do not understand the consequences of their desires whereas Allah, the Exalted, knows the details of all things including what is the best outcome for each decision. A Muslim should remember the many times they believed something was good when it was actually bad and vice versa. Therefore, Muslims should be patient with any choice Allah, the Exalted, makes. A Muslim should also adopt the advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513, by observing those who possess less

blessings than them instead of observing those who possess more. This will prevent one from becoming ungrateful.

True gratitude is shown through one's heart when one acknowledges that the blessing comes from Allah, the Exalted, and includes acting only to please Allah, the Exalted. It is shown through the tongue by praising Him and through actions by using them correctly according to the teachings of Islam. This will lead to an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

## **Making Life Hard**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 68-71:

*“They said, “Call upon your Lord to make clear to us what it is.... “Now you have come with the truth.” So they slaughtered her, but they could hardly do it.”*

The nation of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, asked too many unnecessary questions which only led to more difficulties for them. Muslims should not adopt this mentality as people who have a habit of asking too many questions often fail to fulfil their duties and fail to acquire beneficial knowledge as they are too busy asking and researching about less important and sometimes irrelevant information. This mentality can inspire one to argue and debate over these types of issues also. Unfortunately, this attitude is quite widespread amongst Muslims today as they often argue about non obligatory and less important issues instead of concentrating on fulfilling their obligatory duties and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, correctly meaning, fulfilling them with their full etiquettes and conditions.

A Muslim should instead research and query about topics which are relevant and important to understand for both worldly and religious matters otherwise they will follow in the footsteps of the people

mentioned in this great event and only make their own lives more difficult.

## Seeking Knowledge

The next discussion is based on chapter 18 Al Kahf, verse 60:

*“And [mention] when Moses said to his boy [i.e., servant], “I will not cease [traveling] until I reach the junction of the two seas or continue for a long period.””*

A Muslim should never believe they possess too much knowledge so therefore they do not need to seek or gain more. In addition, they should never be too shy in gaining useful knowledge from anyone irrespective of their age, social status or anything else. The Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, is one of the highest ranking Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, yet he still journeyed to learn from someone who possessed a lower rank than his own. A person who rejects the truth when it is presented to them because they believe they are superior to the one who is imparting the knowledge has clearly adopted pride. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. In fact, this same Hadith warns that an atom’s worth of pride is enough to take someone to Hell.

Unfortunately, this attitude is commonly observed in this day and age as Muslims often ignore the advice and knowledge given to them by those who are younger than them. This is often seen in parents who reject what their children advise claiming parents always know best. As proven



by this great event a person should never be embarrassed or ashamed to accept the truth from anyone.

Put simply, the Muslim who believes they do not need to gain knowledge from others is a truly ignorant person even if they possess much knowledge. Whereas, the person who possesses little knowledge which they act upon and are always open to gaining more beneficial knowledge from anyone is a truly knowledgeable person.

## **Desiring Good**

During the Heavenly Journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, met and greeted the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, moved on the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, began to weep. A voice asked him why he was weeping and he replied that even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was sent after him to Earth yet his followers will enter Paradise in greater number than his own followers. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 416.

This incident is clear indication of the sincerity the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, possessed for his people. 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 general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themselves.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themselves in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

*“...Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them...”*

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

*“...And do good as Allah has done good to you...”*

## **Prepare for the Inevitable**

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3407, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that when the Angel of death came to the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, the latter slapped him. The Angel of death returned to Allah, the Exalted, complaining that the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, did not want to die. Allah, the Exalted, then informed the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, to pass his hand over the back of an ox and he would be granted one more year of life for every hair is hand covered but after that he would die. The Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, decided to die immediately instead of delaying it.

This event teaches mankind the importance of preparing for the inevitable namely, Death. Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a Muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many Muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A Muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The

only way to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

## **A Blessed Grave**

During the Heavenly Journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, passed by the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, who was offering the prayer in his grave. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1635.

Many verses and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discuss the grave which all people will face in some form or fashion. As it is inevitable Muslims must prepare for it as the light or darkness of the grave does not come from the grave itself. It is one's deeds which either darkens or illuminates their grave. Similarly, it is one's deeds which will determine if they face punishment or mercy in their grave. The only way to prepare for it is through piety which consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Muslims often journey to cemeteries in order to bury their relatives and friends. But very few truly realize that one day, sooner or later, their turn will come. Even though, the majority of Muslims dedicate the majority of their efforts to pleasing their family and earning wealth over pleasing Allah, the Exalted, through righteous deeds a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, warns that these two things which Muslims give priority to will abandon them at their grave and only their deeds will remain with them. Therefore, it makes sense for a Muslim to give priority to obtaining righteous deeds to pleasing their family and obtaining excess wealth. This does not mean one should abandon their family and wealth. But it means they should fulfil their duty to their family according

to the teachings of Islam without going overboard by neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and only obtain the wealth they require to achieve this. When this is done correctly it becomes a righteous deed as well. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. One should never abandon their duties to Allah, the Exalted, for the sake of their family or wealth as this will only lead to an isolated, lonely and dark grave.



## Shyness

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3404, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was a very shy person and used to cover his body completely because of his extensive shyness.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2458, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that showing true modesty to Allah, the Exalted, involves guarding the head and what it contains and to protect the stomach and what it contains and to remember death often. He concluded by declaring that whoever intends to seek the hereafter should leave the adornments of the material world.

This Hadith proves that modesty is something which extends beyond one's clothing. It is something which encompasses every aspect of one's life. Protecting the head includes guarding the tongue, eyes, ears and even the thoughts from sins and vain things. Even though, one may hide what they say and what they see from others but they cannot hide these things from Allah, the Exalted. So protecting these parts of the body is a sign of true modesty.

Guarding the stomach means one should avoid unlawful wealth and food. This will lead to the rejection of one's good deeds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

Finally, modesty includes giving priority to the hereafter over the excess of this material world. It is important to note, this includes taking from the material world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excess or extravagance as these are disliked by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 7 Al Araf, verse 31:

*“...and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.”*

The one who behaves in this manner according to the teachings of Islam will find that they adequately prepare for the hereafter and have plenty of time to enjoy the lawful pleasures of the world moderately.

## **Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon him**

### **Justice for All**

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 142:

*"...And Moses said to his brother Aaron [Prophet Haroon, peace be upon him], "Take my place among my people, do right [by them], and do not follow the way of the corrupters.""*

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

people act with justice on an individual level then communities can change for the better and in turn those who are in influential positions, such as politicians, will act justly whether they desire to or not.

## Opposing Evil

The next discussion is based on chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 150:

*"...[Prophet Haroon, peace be upon him] said [to the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, "O son of my mother, indeed the people overpowered me and were about to kill me, so let not the enemies rejoice over me and do not place me among the wrongdoing people.""]"*

The Prophet Haroon, peace be upon him, can never be placed among the wrongdoing people as he objected to the evil practices of his people to the best of his ability.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised the importance of objecting to evil things in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4340. This Hadith clearly shows that it is a duty on all Muslims to object to all forms of evil according to their strength and means. The lowest level, as mentioned in this Hadith, is rejecting the evil with one's heart.

This shows internally approving evil actions is one of the ugliest of those things which are forbidden. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4345, that the one who is present when an evil is

committed and denounces it is like the one who was not present. But the one who was absent and approved the evil deed is like the one who was present when it was committed.

The first two aspects of objecting to evil, mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion, are through one's physical actions and speech. This is only a duty on a Muslim who has the strength to do so for example, they will not be harmed by their actions or words.

It is important to note, objecting to evil with one's hand does not refer to fighting. It refers to correcting the evil actions of others, such as returning the rights of someone which have been unlawfully violated. The one who is in a position to do so yet, refrains from doing so has been warned of a punishment in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4338.

The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised Muslims in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2191, that they should not fear the creation in respect to speaking the truth. In fact, the one who allows the fear of the creation to prevent them from objecting to evil things has been described as the one who hates himself and will be criticized by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4008. It is important to note, this does not refer to the one who remains silent out of fear of being harmed as this is an acceptable excuse but it refers to the person who remains silent because of the status people hold in their eyes.

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4341, advises that a person can give up objecting to evil things through their actions and speech when others obey their greed, follow their incorrect opinions and desires and when they prefer the material world over the hereafter. It does not take a scholar to conclude this time has arrived. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 105.

*“O you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided...”*

But it is important to note, a Muslim should continue with this important duty in respect to their dependents as this is a duty on them according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928, and in respect to those they feel physically and verbally safe from, as this is the superior attitude.

Objecting to evil things which are apparent is what the main Hadith under discussion refers to. Meaning, it does not grant permission to Muslims to spy on others in order to find evil things to object to. Spying and anything associated with it in this respect are forbidden. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

*“O you who have believed...do not spy...”*

It is important to note, that a Muslim must object to evil according to the teachings of Islam and not their own desires. A Muslim may believe they are acting for sake of Allah, the Exalted, when they are not. This is proven when they object to evil in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, what is considered a good deed may well become a sin because of this negative attitude.

A Muslim must object to evil in a gentle and fair way preferably in private in accordance to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The opposite of these characteristics will only push people away from sincerely repenting and may lead to further sins as a result of angering them.



## Supporting People

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verses 29-32:

*“[Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said] And appoint for me a minister [i.e., assistant] from my family. Aaron [Prophet Haroon, peace be upon him], my brother. Increase through him my strength. And let him share my task.”*

Since the passing of the righteous predecessors the strength of the Muslim nation has weakened dramatically. It is logical that the greater the number of people in a group the stronger the group will become yet Muslims have somehow defied this logic. The strength of the Muslim nation has only decreased as the number of Muslims have increased. One of the main reasons this has occurred is connected to chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2 of the Holy Quran:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands Muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many Muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many Muslims now

observe who is doing an action instead of observing what they are doing. If the person is linked to them for example, a relative, they support them even if the thing is not good. Similarly, if the person has no relationship with them they turn away from supporting them even if the thing is good. This attitude completely contradicts the traditions of the righteous predecessors. They would support others in good irrespective of who was doing it. In fact, they went so far on acting on this verse of the Holy Quran that they would even support those they did not get on with as long as it was a good thing.

The other thing connected to this is that many Muslims fail to support each other in good as they believe the person they are supporting will gain more prominence than them. This condition has even affected scholars and Islamic educational institutes. They make lame excuses not to aid others in good as they do not have a relationship with them and they fear their own institution will be forgotten and those they help will gain further respect in society. But this is completely wrong as one only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the truth. As long as one's intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, supporting others in good will increase their respect within society. Allah, the Exalted, will cause the hearts of the people to turn to them even if their support is for another organisation, institution or person. For example, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed this world Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily challenged for the Caliphate and would have found plenty of support in his favour. But he knew the right thing to do was to nominate Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not worry about being forgotten by society if he supported another person. He instead obeyed the command in the verse mentioned earlier and supported what was right. This is confirmed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. The honour and respect of Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, within society only increased by this action. This is obvious to those who are aware of Islamic history.

Muslims must reflect on this deeply, change their mentality and strive to aid others in good irrespective of who is doing it and not hold back fearing their support will cause them to be forgotten within society. Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will never be forgotten in both this world and the next. In fact, their respect and honour will only grow in both worlds.

## Focusing on Obedience

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 90:

*“And Aaron [Prophet Haroon, peace be upon him] had already told them before [the return of Moses], “O my people, you are only being tested by it, and indeed, your Lord is the Most Merciful...””*

This reminds Muslims that in some form worldly blessings will always be used to test mankind. In order to obtain success they must remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

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

There are two aspects of life. One aspect are the situations people find themselves in whether they are times of ease or difficulties. The control of what situation a person faces is out of their hands. Allah, the Exalted, has decided this and there is no escaping them. Therefore, stressing over the situations one faces does not make sense as they are destined

and therefore inevitable. The other aspect is a person's reaction to each situation. This is in each person's control and this is what they are judged on for example, showing patience or impatience in a difficult situation. Therefore, a Muslim must concentrate on their behaviour and reaction in each situation instead of stressing over being in a situation as this is unavoidable. If a Muslim desires to succeed in both worlds they should assess each situation and always act in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. For example, in times of ease they must use the blessings they possess as prescribed by Islam which is true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

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

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

## United Group

The next discussion is based on chapter 20 Taha, verse 94:

*“[Prophet Haroon, peace be upon him, said]... I feared that you would say, “You caused division among the Children of Israel...””*

This statement from the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon him, reminds Muslims the importance of unifying people in matters which please Allah, the Exalted.

With the passing of time people often become divided and lose the strong connection they once had with one another. There are many causes of this but a major cause is the foundation on which their connection was formed by their parents and society. It is commonly known that when the foundation of a building is weak the building will either get damaged over time or even collapse. Similarly, when the foundation of bonds connecting people are not correct the bonds between them will eventually weaken or even break. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brought the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, together he formed the bonds between them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, most Muslims today bring people together for the sake of tribalism, brotherhood and to show off to other families. Even though, the majority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not related but as the foundation of the bonds connecting them was correct namely,

for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, their bonds grew from strength to strength. Whereas, many Muslims nowadays are related by blood yet, with the passing of time become separated as the foundation of their bonds was based on falsehood namely, tribalism and similar things.

Muslims must understand that if desire for their bonds to endure and to earn reward for fulfilling the important duty of upholding the ties of kinship and the rights of non-relatives then they must only forge bonds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The foundation of this is that people only connect with one another and act together in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been commanded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

*“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”*

## Obtaining Peace

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 120:

*“Peace upon Moses and Aaron [Prophet Haroon, peace be upon him].”*

Throughout the divine scriptures there are many examples which indicate that a person shall be treated according to how they act. For example, in one verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, declares that He will remember the person who remembers Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152.

*“So remember Me; I will remember you.”*

Another example is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 40:

*“...fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me]...”*



Finally, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever shows mercy to others will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is quite obvious that people strive in this material world as they desire peace of mind and contentment. In light of the earlier discussion, peace in one's life is often achieved when a person allows others to live in peace. If one reflects on their own life they will realise that people can be split into two categories: those who mind their business and allow others to live in peace and those who do not. It does not take a genius to figure out that those who let others live in peace are the ones who gain peace. Whereas, members of the other group never find peace irrespective of how many worldly blessings they may possess. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3976, that a Muslim cannot perfect their Islam until they avoid things which do not concern them. Those who ignore this advice and busy themselves with interfering with other people are the ones who never find peace. As they deprive others of peace in turn Allah, the Exalted, deprives them of it.

Therefore, a large step towards achieving peace of mind is to let others live in peace. It is important to note, this does not mean one should abandon commanding good and forbidding evil as this is an important duty. But it means that those things which are not sinful should be left alone as constantly chiding others on issues which are not unlawful only leads to enmity and the loss of peace in peoples' lives. There was a day and age when people loved being advised by others on all lawful and unlawful matters even if this meant they were being chided as they desired to reform themselves for the better. But that day has long passed. Nowadays, most people dislike being chided over the unlawful

let alone those things which are lawful yet undesirable. So it is best to avoid this attitude if one desires to gain a bit of peace in their life.

To conclude, the one who lets others live in peace shall be granted peace by Allah, the Exalted.

## Doing Good

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verses 120-121:

*“Peace upon...Aaron [Prophet Haroon, peace be upon him].” Indeed, We thus reward the doers of good.”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many Muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly they must also treat others with good character otherwise they will not succeed as the only truly successful people are the believers.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be rewarded like the Muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

## **Holy Prophet Dhul Kifl, peace be upon him**

### **Embodying Patience**

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 85:

*“And [mention]...Dhul-Kifl; all were of the patient.”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1302, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that real patience is shown at the onset of a difficulty.

It is important to understand that true patience is shown throughout a calamity meaning, from the very onset of the difficulty onwards. Accepting the reality of a difficulty, such as the death of a loved one, eventually, with the passing of time occurs with everyone. This is acceptance not true patience.

Muslims should therefore ensure they encounter difficulties while patient believing that everything which Allah, the Exalted, chooses is for the best even if they fail to observe the wisdoms behind the choices.

Instead, they should reflect on the many times when they believed something was good yet, it ended up being bad and vice versa. Understanding the extreme short sightedness and limited knowledge of humans and the infinite knowledge and wisdom of Allah, the Exalted, can aid a Muslim to show patience from the onset of a difficulty. 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.”*

In addition, it is important for Muslims to continue showing patience till the end of their life. This is because a person can easily lose the reward of patience even if they were patient from the onset by demonstrating impatience further down the line. This is an extremely deadly trap of the Devil. He patiently waits for decades just to ruin the reward of a Muslim. The Holy Quran makes it clear that a Muslim will gain reward for what they bring to Judgment Day, meaning, take with them when they die it does not declare they will gain reward after simply doing a deed, such as showing patience at the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 160:

*“Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgment] with a good deed...”*

## Total Mercy

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verses 85-86:

*“And [mention]...Dhul-Kifl; all were of the patient. And We admitted them into Our mercy...”*

Throughout the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Muslims have been advised to be merciful to others. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, advises that those who show mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, that showing mercy is not only through one's actions, such as donating wealth to the poor. It in fact encompasses every aspect of one's life and interaction with others, such as one's words. This is why Allah, the Exalted, warns those who show mercy to others by donating charity that failing to show mercy through their speech, such as counting their favours done to others, only cancels their reward. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

*“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury...”*

True mercy is shown in everything: one's facial expression, one's glance and the tone of their speech. This was the full mercy shown by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is therefore how Muslims must act.

In addition, showing mercy is so important that Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear in the Holy Quran that even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possessed countless beautiful and noble characteristics yet, the one which attracted the hearts of people towards him and Islam was mercy. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

*“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”*

It clearly warns that without mercy people would have fled from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If this was the case in respect to him even though he possessed countless other beautiful characteristics how can Muslims, who do not possess such noble characteristics, expect to have a positive impact on others, such as their children, without showing true mercy?



Simply put, Muslims should treat others how they wish to be treated by Allah, the Exalted, and others, which is undoubtedly with true and full mercy.

## **Achieve Piety**

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verses 85-86:

*“And [mention]...Dhul-Kifl;...Indeed, they were of the righteous [pious].”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful.

Piety can be summed up to mean fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, 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 includes treating others how one desires to be treated by people.

An aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things take a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful. And the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things and only uses lawful things will protect their religion and honor.

If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, it occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech meaning, speech which derives no benefit nor is it a sin, often leads to evil speech such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoided the first step by not indulging in vain speech they would avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to adopt piety as described earlier, a branch of which is to avoid vain and doubtful things out of fear they will lead to the unlawful.

## **Achieving Superiority**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 48:

*“And remember...Dhul-Kifl, and all are among the outstanding.”*

A person can only become outstanding when they adopt the characteristics that are beloved to Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7432, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves the servant who possesses the following characteristics. The first characteristic is piety. This means they strive to fulfill their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and they fulfill their duties towards people, such as striving in this world in order to obtain their necessities and the necessities of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being independent of the creation. This means that a Muslim should fully utilize the means they have been provided by Allah, the Exalted, such as their physical strength in order to fulfill their duties. They should not

behave lazily and seek things from people as this habit leads to dependence on them and reduces trusting in Allah, the Exalted. One should firmly believe that no matter what happens whatever is destined to be their provision was allocated to them 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. A Muslim should focus on their efforts and trust that Allah, the Exalted, will grant them what is best for them.

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being anonymous. This means a Muslim should not strive in worldly or religious matters in order to obtain fame. As this can lead to many sins, such as showing off, and this only destroys one's reward. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that seeking fame is more destructive to one's religion than two wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. Instead, a Muslim should strive to fulfill their duties and if they become famous they must maintain sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, without altering their obedience to Him in order to please people as this leads to destruction in both worlds.

## **Holy Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him**

### **Bravery**

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 251:

*“...David killed Goliath [during a battle]...”*

Goliath was known for his strength and courage yet the bravery of the Holy Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him, overcame him during battle.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2511, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned Muslims to avoid behaving cowardly. This attitude prevents trust in Allah, the Exalted, and in what He has promised, such as one's guaranteed provision. It can cause one to seek their provision in doubtful and unlawful means which will destroy a person in both worlds. Allah, the Exalted, does not accept any deed which has a foundation in the unlawful. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

In addition, being a coward prevents one from striving against the Devil and one's inner Devil which requires genuine struggle. This will lead one to fail in obeying Allah, the Exalted, which 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. And it will therefore prevent them from fulfilling the rights of people. Both worldly and religious success requires effort and time. A coward will be too afraid to undertake this struggle and will instead be lazy which leads to failure in both worldly and religious matters.

## Power

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 251:

*“...and Allah gave him [Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him] the kingship...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for Muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest as well as using each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach Muslims to push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themselves harm.



One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

*“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.<sup>1</sup> So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”*

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. They should not be neglected nor handed over to others such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

## True Wisdom

The next discussion is based on chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 251:

*“...and Allah gave him [Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him]...wisdom...”*

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. This is in fact the wisdom mentioned in this verse.

## **The Bestower of Bounty**

The next discussion is based on chapter 34 Saba, verse 10:

*“And We certainly gave David from Us bounty...”*

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is infinitely bountiful and bestows favours and blessings without recompense or external cause. He gives generously without being asked.

The Muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A Muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a Muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

A Muslim should act on this divine name by bestowing the blessings they have been given to others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. The one who gives to others will be given more than they could have ever imagined. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

*“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.”*

## **Life vs Death**

The next discussion is based on chapter 34 Saba, verse 10:

*“And We certainly gave David from Us bounty. [We said], “O mountains, repeat [Our] praises with him, and the birds [as well].”...”*

The Holy Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him, remembered Allah, the Exalted, in all states.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6407, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the difference between the person who remembers Allah, the Exalted, and the one who does not is like a living person compared to a dead person.

It is important for Muslims who desire to create a strong connection with Allah, the Exalted, so that they can overcome all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter successfully to remember Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible. Put simply, the more they remember Him the more they will achieve this vital goal.

This is achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The second is by remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue. But the highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This is achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This requires one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds.

Those who remain on the first two levels will receive reward depending on their intention but they are unlikely to increase the strength of their faith and piety unless they move to the third and highest level of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

## Earning Wealth

The next discussion is based on chapter 34 Saba, verses 10-11:

*“...And We made pliable for him [Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him] iron. [Commanding him], "Make full coats of mail and calculate [precisely] the links...”*

Even though he was a king the Holy Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him, would earn and eat from his own earnings. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072.

In the same Hadith the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that no one has eaten anything better than from the earnings of their own hands.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse laziness for trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Unfortunately, many Muslims turn away from working a lawful occupation, go on social benefits and inhabit the Mosques claiming to trust in Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them. This is not trusting in Allah, the Exalted, at all. It is only laziness which contradicts the teachings of Islam. True trust in Allah, the Exalted, in respect to gaining wealth is to use the means Allah, the Exalted, provided a person, such as their physical strength, in order to obtain lawful wealth



according to the teachings of Islam and then trust that Allah, the Exalted, will provide lawful wealth to them through these means. The aim of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is not to cause one to give up using the means He has created as this would make them useless and Allah, the Exalted, does not create useless things. The purpose of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is to prevent one from earning wealth through doubtful or unlawful means. As a Muslim should firmly believe their provision which includes wealth was allocated to them 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 allocation cannot change under any circumstances. A Muslim's duty is to strive in obtaining this through lawful means which is the tradition of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072. Using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, as He created them for this very purpose. A Muslim should therefore not be lazy while claiming trust in Allah, the Exalted, by going on social benefits when they have the means to earn lawful wealth through their own efforts and the means created and provided to them by Allah, the Exalted.

## **Greatest Rank**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 17:

*“...and remember Our servant, David...”*

This verse indicates the highest rank a person can reach namely, a sincere servant of Allah, the Exalted. If there was a greater rank than this Allah, the Exalted, would have referred to the Holy Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him, with it. This has been supported by many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 851, where the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, referred to himself as the servant of Allah, the Exalted, before declaring his Messengership. This is a clear lesson to all Muslims that if they desire ultimate success and the highest ranks in both worlds they must become true servants of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved by following in the footsteps of the greatest servant of Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Servanthood is not possible to achieve any other way. 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. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

## Real Strength

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 17:

*“...and remember Our servant, David, the possessor of strength...”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4168, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the strong believer is more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, than a weaker believer.

This does not necessarily refer to physical strength which one uses to perform righteous deeds. But it also refers to knowledge and acting on it. When one acts on their knowledge it leads to certainty of faith. The one who possesses strong faith will fulfil their duties according to their knowledge and not blind imitation like the weak believer. A weak believer believes something based on hearsay like if they were told a person is inside their house whereas the strong believer believes and acts based on knowledge for example, if they saw the person inside their house through a window. The stronger one's faith the greater their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This in turn increases their success in both worlds. 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...”*

## **Turning to Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 17:

*“...and remember Our servant, David...indeed, he was one who repeatedly turned back [to Allah].”*

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He is with anyone who remembers Him.

With the rise of mental problems and disorders, such as depression, it is vital for Muslims to understand the importance of this declaration. There is a small chance of a person experiencing a mental issue when they are constantly surrounded and aided by someone that truly loves them. If this is true for a person it is undoubtedly more befitting for Allah, the Exalted, who has promised to be with the one who remembers Him. Acting on this declaration alone would eliminate all mental issues, such as depression. It is the reason why being secluded from others or being amongst others did not affect the mental state of the righteous predecessors as they were always in the company of Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious that when one obtains the company of Allah, the Exalted, they will overcome all obstacles and difficulties successfully until they reach His proximity in the hereafter.

In addition, out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, has not restricted this declaration in anyway. For example, He did not declare He was only with the righteous or with those who perform specific good deeds. He in fact encompassed every Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith or how many sins they have committed. So a Muslim should never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. But it is important to note the condition mentioned in this Hadith namely, to remember Allah, the Exalted. This is not only remembering Him with one's tongue but more importantly it is to remember Him through one's actions. This is only achieved by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The one who behaves in such a manner will be blessed with the company and support of Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, the more one obeys Allah, the Exalted, the more they will receive His company. What one gives is what they shall receive.

## **The Support of Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 20:

*“And We strengthened his [Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him] kingdom...”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1081, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims how to gain blessings in their provision, divine support and an improvement in their condition and state.

The first thing is to sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted, before one dies. As the time of death is unknown this Hadith actually indicates sincerely repenting whenever one commits a sin meaning, repenting without delay. This consists of seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and whoever else has been wronged, feeling regret, making a firm promise not to commit the same or a similar sin again. And finally, if possible, to make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

The next thing advised in the main Hadith is that a Muslim must make use of their time before they become preoccupied with responsibilities, an illness or a difficulty. A Muslim can achieve this by obeying Allah, the

Exalted, through fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must hasten to perform righteous deeds within their means as much as possible without delay as the tomorrow they hope for may never come. It is hoped that the one who behaves in this manner will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, when they are no longer in a position to perform extra righteous deeds due to a change in circumstances.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a Muslim must strengthen their bond with Allah, the Exalted, by remembering Him much. True remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, consists of three levels. The first is internal remembrance meaning, sincerity to Him. The second level consists of remembering Allah, the Exalted, by speaking good words and avoiding vain and sinful speech. And the highest level is to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, through one's actions as outlined earlier.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith is giving much charity both hidden and open. This includes both the obligatory and voluntary charity. It is important to note, this means giving charity according to one's means whether it is much or little. Allah, the Exalted, does not observe quantity He observes and judges actions based on quality meaning, one's sincerity. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. This leaves Muslims with no excuses but to give charity according to their means. In addition, it is important to give charity regularly instead of once in a while as regular deeds are more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, even if they are little. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465. Finally, those who desire to encourage others to give charity can give it publically. This will lead to them gaining the same reward as those who donate because of their inspiration. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. But those who are fearful of showing off, which



cancels their reward, should do so privately. Islam has provided many options and opportunities for Muslims to gain much reward which lead to the removal of their burdens in both worlds.

## Correct Speech

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 20:

*“...We...gave him [Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him]...discernment in speech..”*

An aspect of this is always using one's speech correctly. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2501, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that whoever is silent is saved.

This means the one who is silent from vain or evil speech and only speaks good words will be saved by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This is important to understand as the main reason people will enter Hell is because of their speech. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. In fact, it only takes a single evil word to cause a person to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day which has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

Speech can be of three types. The first is evil speech which should be avoided at all costs. The second is vain speech which only causes one to waste time which will lead to a great regret on Judgment Day. In addition, the first step of sinful speech is often vain speech. So it is safer

to avoid this type of speech. The final type is good speech which should always be adopted. Based on these aspects two thirds of speech should be removed from one's life.

In addition, the one who speaks too much will only reflect on their actions and the hereafter a little as this requires silence. This will prevent one from assessing their deeds which inspires one to perform more righteous deeds and sincerely repent from their sins. This person will then be prevented from changing for the better.

Finally, those who speak too much often discuss worldly things and things which are entertaining and fun. This will cause them to adopt a mentality whereby they dislike discussing or listening to serious issues like death and the hereafter. This will prevent them from preparing adequately for the hereafter which will lead to a great regret and a potential punishment.

All of this can be avoided if one simply remains silent from sinful and vain speech and instead only speaks good words. Therefore, the one who is silent in this way will be saved from trouble in this world and from punishment in the next world.

## Thinking Before Acting

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 21:

*“And has there come to you the news of the adversaries, when they climbed over the wall of the [the Prophet Dawud’s, peace be upon him] prayer chamber.”*

Behaving in this manner with a king or another authoritative figure can easily lead to serious punishment. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2012, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking things through is from Allah, the Exalted, while being hasty is from the Devil.

This is an extremely important teaching to understand and act on as Muslims who perform much righteous deeds often destroy them through hastiness. For example, they may utter some evil words in a fit of rage which may cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

The vast majority of sins and difficulties, such as arguments, occur because people fail to think things through and instead act in a hasty way. The sign of intelligence is when one thinks before speaking or

acting and only precedes when they know their speech or action is good and beneficial in worldly or religious matters.

Even though, a Muslim should not delay in performing righteous deeds yet, they should still think things through before performing them. This is because a righteous deed may receive no reward simply because its conditions and etiquettes have not been fulfilled because of one's hastiness. In this respect, one should only move forward in any matter after they have thought things through.

The one who behaves in this manner will not only minimize their sins and increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, but they will minimize the difficulties they encounter, such as arguments and disagreements, in all aspects of their life.

## Visiting Others

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 22:

*“When they entered upon David [without permission] and he was alarmed by them...”*

It is important for a Muslim to fulfil the etiquettes and conditions of visiting others according to the teachings of Islam in order to obtain reward. In this day and age it is easy to contact the host and their family beforehand in order to gain permission and ensure they visit them at the appropriate time. They should not stay long thereby, causing trouble to the host and their relatives. They should control their actions and speech so that they avoid all types of sins such as gossiping, backbiting and slandering others. They should discuss beneficial matters in respect to the world and the hereafter. Only when one behaves in this manner will they obtain the reward outlined in the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If they fail in this they will either gain no reward or they may well be left with sins depending on how they behaved. Unfortunately, many Muslims enjoy performing this righteous deed but fail to fulfill its conditions correctly. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

*“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people.*

*And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then  
We are going to give him a great reward.”*

## Making Problems Small

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 23:

*"[The accuser said to the Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him] Indeed this, my brother, has ninety-nine ewes, and I have one ewe; so he said, 'Entrust her to me,' and he overpowered me in speech."*

Even though the accuser had a right to bring this case in front of the king and judge, the Holy Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him, yet it would have been more appropriate for them to wait until a more suitable time as it was not an emergency. Instead they climbed over a great wall to enter his palace and then entered his private quarters without permission. Chapter 38 Saad, verses 21-22:

*"And has there come to you the news of the adversaries, when they climbed over the wall of [his] prayer chamber. When they entered upon David and he was alarmed by them?..."*

This indicates the importance of taking a step back and not over reacting when facing problems.



One of the ways of achieving this is by always comparing one's difficulty to harder and more severe difficulties. When one does this it will make their problem seem small and less significant. This change in focus can aid a Muslim to be patient and remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted. This can be explained through a worldly example. A person suffering from a severe migraine can be effected in such a way that it seems to them that the world is collapsing around them. But if this same person was on a ship which is about to hit an iceberg and sink in the middle of a freezing ocean then their severe migraine will not seem like a big deal. In fact, they would probably not even be effected by it at all as their whole focus would become shifted to the imminent life threatening danger namely, the sinking ship. This is how a Muslim should behave during difficulties. When they encounter a difficulty they should realise it could have been much worse and try to shift their focus on greater difficulties they could have encountered. This can be achieved by observing others who are in more difficult situations than them. For example, a person who suffers from back pain can ponder over the person who is physically disabled. Or they could ponder over much greater difficulties such as death and Judgment Day. This comparison will reduce the significance of their difficulty and its effects, which in turn will aid them in remaining patient and steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience.

## **Business Dealings**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 24:

*"[Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him] said, "He has certainly wronged you in demanding your ewe [in addition] to his ewes. And indeed, many associates oppress one another, except for those who believe and do righteous deeds - and few are they."..."*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings of Islam. In respect to business dealings a Muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when Muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes not striving to con others by making them pay excessively for goods. A Muslim should simply treat others how they desire to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way, a Muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters they should not mistreat others.

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

## Judging Others

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 24:

*"[Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him] said, "He has certainly wronged you in demanding your ewe [in addition] to his ewes. And indeed, many associates oppress one another, except for those who believe and do righteous deeds - and few are they." And David became certain that We had tried him, and he asked forgiveness of his Lord..."*

Even though the Holy Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him, did not commit a sin but it appears he made this comment (and not a judgement) without hearing from the accused first. It is a duty of a judge to hear both sides before making a comment or judgement on the case they are presiding over. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, that if two rivals came to him for judgement he should not make a judgement until he heard from both sides. He concluded that behaving in this manner would make things clear to him. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 147.

## Drawing Closer

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 25:

*“...and indeed, for him [Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him] is nearness to Us...”*

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 a Muslim can only draw close to Him through fulfilling their obligatory duties. And they can achieve the love of Allah, the Exalted, through voluntary righteous deeds.

This description splits the servants of Allah, the Exalted, into two categories. The first group draws near to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer, and in respect to people, such as the obligatory charity. This can be summed up by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

The second category of those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, are superior to the first group as they not only fulfil their obligatory duties but strive in voluntary righteous deeds. This clearly shows that this is the only path to the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

Whoever takes a path other than this will not achieve this vital goal. This completely rejects the concept of obtaining sainthood without striving in obedience to Allah, the Exalted. The person who claims this is simply a liar. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body becomes pure. This leads to righteous deeds. So if a person does not perform righteous deeds, such as their obligatory duties, then their body is impure which means their spiritual heart is impure as well. This person can never reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, the greatest voluntary righteous deeds one can perform are those based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anyone who chooses to perform voluntary righteous deeds not based on his traditions has been fooled by the Devil as no path will take one close to Allah, the Exalted, except the path and actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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....”*

The pious Muslims who belong in the second higher group are also those who avoid unnecessary things of this material world. This attitude aids them in focusing their efforts on performing voluntary righteous deeds. It is this group who have perfected their faith by loving, hating, giving and withholding all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds Allah, the Exalted, 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.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this Muslim's supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.



## **Your End**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 25:

*“...for him [Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him] is...a good place of return.”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7232, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people will be resurrected on Judgment Day in the same state they died on Earth.

This means that if a person dies on good they will be resurrected on good. But if they die on evil they will be raised in an evil way.

A Muslim should not live in heedlessness by believing just because they have faith in Islam it guarantees they will die and therefore be raised in a good state on Judgment Day. If they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then die in this state without sincerely repenting then they will be raised in an evil way. It does not take a scholar to determine what will happen to this person on Judgment Day.

From this Hadith one can understand that the way they will die will be in the same state they have lived. Meaning, if they lived in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will die in a good state and therefore be raised in a good state which includes being raised with the righteous as they practically followed in their footsteps. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

A Muslim should therefore not walk the path to Hell by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and believe that they will somehow be raised with the pious and end up in Paradise.

## A Good Successor

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 26:

*"[Allah, the Exalted, said], "O David, indeed We have made you a successor upon the earth..."*

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

In addition, this important position should remind Muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted, become angry with the Muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

## Remain Just

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 26:

*"[Allah, the Exalted, said], "O David...judge between the people in truth..."*

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

## Avoiding Desires

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 26:

*"[Allah, the Exalted, said], "O David...do not follow [your own] desire, as it will lead you astray from the way of Allah." Indeed, those who go astray from the way of Allah will have a severe punishment for having forgotten the Day of Account."*

This verse makes it clear that when one follows their lawful desires excessively or follows unlawful desires it causes them to forget their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This in turn causes one to stray off the straight path, which involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, through speech and actions. And this in turn leads to destruction in both worlds. Therefore, if a Muslim desires to remain rightly guided, prepare adequately for the Day of Judgement and achieve success in both worlds they must avoid pursuing their desires.

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.

## **Fulfill Your Needs**

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1131, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most beloved (night) voluntarily prayer to Allah, the Exalted, was the prayer of the Holy Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him. He used to sleep for half of the night and then offer prayer for one third of the night and again sleep for its sixth part.

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1145, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, descends every night to the nearest Heaven according to His infinite majesty and invites people to ask Him to fulfill their needs so that He can fulfill them.

Voluntary night time worship proves one's sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, as no other eyes are watching them. Offering it is a means to having an intimate conversation with Allah, the Exalted. And it is a sign of one's servanthood to Him. It has countless virtues for example, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614, declares that it is the best voluntary prayer.

No one will have a rank higher on Judgment Day or in Paradise than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and this rank has been directly connected to the voluntary night prayer. This



shows that those who establish the night voluntary prayer will be blessed with the highest ranks in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 79:

*“And from [part of] the night, pray with it [i.e., recitation of the Quran] as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.”*

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3579, advises that a Muslim is closest to Allah, the Exalted, in the last part of the night. Therefore, one can derive countless blessings if they remember Allah, the Exalted, at this time.

All Muslims desire their supplications to be answered and their needs to be fulfilled. Therefore, they should strive to offer the voluntary night prayer as a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1770, advises that there is a special hour in every night when good supplications are always answered.

Establishing the voluntary night prayer is an excellent way to prevent one from committing sins, it helps a person to stay away from pointless social gatherings and it protects a person from many physical illnesses. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3549.

One should prepare for the voluntary night prayer by not over eating or drinking especially, before bed as it induces laziness. One should not unnecessarily tire themselves out during the day. A short nap during the day can help with this. Finally, one should avoid sins and strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as the obedient find it easier to offer the voluntary night prayer.

## **A Unique Deed**

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1131, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most beloved method of fasting to Allah, the Exalted, was adopted by the Holy Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him. He would fast on alternate days.

In a Divine Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2219, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that all righteous deeds people perform are for themselves except for fasting as this is for Allah, the Exalted, and He shall reward it directly.

This Hadith indicates the uniqueness of fasting. One of the reasons it is described in this manner is because all other righteous deeds are visible to people, such as the prayer, or they are between people, such as secret charity. Whereas, fasting is a unique righteous deed as others cannot know someone is fasting by only observing them.

In addition, fasting is a righteous deed which puts a lock on every aspect of oneself. Meaning, a person who fasts correctly will be prevented from committing verbal and physical sins, such as looking at and hearing unlawful things. This is also achieved through the prayer but the prayer is only performed for a short time and is visible to others whereas, fasting occurs throughout the day and is invisible to others. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

*“...Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing...”*

It is clear from the following verse a person who does not complete the obligatory fasts without a valid reason will not be a true believer as the two have been directly connected. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 183:

*“O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous”*

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 723, that if a Muslim does not complete a single obligatory fast without a valid reason they cannot make up for the reward and blessings lost even if they fasted every day for their entire life.

In addition, as indicated by the verse quoted earlier fasting correctly leads to piety. Meaning, simply starving during the day does not lead to piety but paying extra attention to abstaining from sins and performing righteous deeds during the fast will lead to piety. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 707, warns that a fast will not be significant if one does not abstain from speaking and acting on falsehood. A similar Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1690, warns that some fasting people obtain nothing except hunger. When one becomes more aware and careful in obeying Allah, the Exalted, while they are fasting this habit

will eventually affect them so they behave in a similar way even when they are not fasting. This is in fact true piety.

The righteousness mentioned in the verse quoted earlier is connected to fasting as fasting reduces one's evil desires and passions. It prevents pride and the encouragement of sins. This is because fasting hinders the appetite of the stomach and one's carnal desires. These two things lead to many sins. In addition, the desire for these two things is greater than the desire for other unlawful things. So whoever controls them through fasting will find it easier to control the weaker evil desires. This leads to true righteousness.

As briefly indicated earlier there are different levels of fasting. The first and lowest level of fasting is when one abstains from the things which will break their fast, such as food. The next level is abstaining from sins which damages one's fast thereby reducing the reward of their fast, such as lying. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2235. Fasting which involves each member of the body is the next level. This is when each body part fasts from sins for example, the eyes from looking at the unlawful, the ears from listening to the unlawful and so on. The next level is when one behaves in this manner even when they are not fasting. Finally, the highest level of fasting is abstaining from all things which are not connected to Allah, the Exalted.

A Muslim should also fast inwardly as their body fasts outwardly by abstaining from sinful or vain thoughts. They should fast from persisting on their own plans in respect to their desires and try to concentrate on fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. In addition, they should fast from inwardly challenging the decree of Allah, the Exalted, and instead

except destiny and whatever it brings knowing Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind these choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Finally, a Muslim should aim for the highest reward by keeping their fast a secret and not informing others if it is avoidable as informing others unnecessarily leads to a loss of reward as it is an aspect of showing off.

## **Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him**

### **Path to Paradise**

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 79:

*“...and to each [including the Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him] We gave judgement and knowledge...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever follows a path seeking knowledge Allah, the Exalted, will make the path to Paradise easy for them.

This indicates both a physical path someone takes seeking knowledge, such as attending lectures and classes, and a path whereby someone seeks knowledge without a physical journey. It encompasses all forms of knowledge, such as listening, reading, studying and writing about knowledge. The path to Paradise has many obstacles preventing a Muslim from reaching it. Only the one who possesses knowledge of them and how to overcome them will reach Paradise safely. In addition, it is easily understood that a person cannot reach a city in this world without knowledge of its location and the route which leads to it.

Similarly, Paradise cannot be obtained without knowing these things about it, such as the path leading to it.

But the important thing to note is that a Muslim's intention to seek and act on knowledge must be to please Allah, the Exalted. Whoever seeks religious knowledge for a worldly reason, such as showing off, will end up in Hell if they fail to sincerely repent. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253.

In addition, a Muslim must strive to act on their knowledge as knowledge without action is of no value or benefit. This is like the one who possesses knowledge of a path to safety but does not take it and instead remains in an area full of dangers. This is why knowledge can be split into two categories. The first is when one acts on their knowledge, which leads to piety and an increase in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. The second is when one fails to act on their knowledge. This type will not increase one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in fact, it will only increase them in arrogance believing they are superior to others even though they are like donkeys which carry books that do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

*"...and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]..."*

Gaining and acting on knowledge so that one benefits oneself and others is in fact the wisdom mentioned in the main verse under discussion.



## Showing Gratitude

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 15:

*“...they [including the Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him] said, “Praise [is due] to Allah, who has favored us over many of His believing servants.””*

This was a demonstration of his gratitude for the countless blessings Allah, the Exalted, granted him.

A Muslim must ensure they fulfill all three aspects of gratitude so that they avoid becoming a denier of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who is ungrateful in reality, scorns the One who granted them the blessings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

*“...And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.”*

The three aspects of gratitude are to internally acknowledge Allah, the Exalted, as the sole Creator and Provider of all blessings. An aspect of this is to correct one's intention so that they only perform actions to

please Allah, the Exalted. The next aspect is to praise Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue. And the final and highest aspect is to practically show gratitude through one's actions by using each blessing as prescribed by Islam in order to please 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]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'”*

As true gratitude leads to an increase in blessings Muslims should fear that showing ingratitude may cause the blessings they possess to either be taken away from them or for their blessings to be used against them by becoming a burden and a curse for them in both worlds. It is important to note, even if a Muslim becomes truly grateful they will still face tests and difficulties as they are guaranteed. But if they behave in the correct way they will be guided through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and body in this world and a great reward in the hereafter.

## A Good Legacy

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 16:

*“And Solomon inherited David...”*

The Holy Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him, left behind a legacy for his son the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

First of all, it is important to understand worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example is the great empire of Pharaoh. Islam not only teaches Muslims to send blessings ahead of them to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds but it also teaches them to leave a lovely legacy behind from which people can benefit from. In fact, when a Muslim passes away and leaves behind anything which is useful, such as an ongoing charity in the form of a water well they will be rewarded for it. This is confirmed in Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4223. So a Muslim should strive to perform righteous deeds and send forward as much good as possible but they should also try leaving a good legacy behind which will benefit them after they pass away.

Unfortunately, many Muslims are so concerned about their wealth and properties that they only end up leaving them behind which does not benefit them in the least. Each Muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for creating a legacy for themselves as the moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly. Today is the day a Muslim should truly reflect on the legacy they will leave behind. If this legacy is good and beneficial they should praise Allah, the Exalted, for granting them the strength to do so. But if it is something which will not benefit them then they should prepare something which will so that they not only send forward good to the hereafter but also leave good behind. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. So each Muslim should ask themselves what is their legacy?

## A Blessing or a Curse

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 16:

*"...He [Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him] said, "O people...we have been given from all things. Indeed, this is evident bounty.""*

The things Allah, the Exalted, granted the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, were a clear bounty and blessing as he used them in the correct way meaning, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In reality, in most cases nothing in this material world in itself is good or bad, such as wealth. What makes a thing good or bad is the way it is used. It is important to understand that the very purpose of everything which was created by Allah, the Exalted, was for it to be used correctly according to the teachings of Islam. When something is not used correctly it in reality becomes useless. For example, wealth is useful in both worlds when it is used correctly such as being spent on the necessities of a person and their dependents. But it can become useless and even a curse for its bearer if it is not used correctly, such as being hoarded or spent on sinful things. Simply hoarding wealth causes wealth to lose value. How can paper and metal coins one tucks away be useful? In this respect, there is no difference between a blank piece of paper and a note of money. It is only useful when it is used correctly.

So if a Muslim desires all their worldly possessions to become a blessing for them in both worlds all they have to do is use them correctly according to the teachings found in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they use them incorrectly then the same blessing will become a burden and curse for them in both worlds. It is as simple as that.

## Sincerity to the People

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 18:

*"...when they [Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, and his army] came upon the valley of the ants, an ant said, "O ants, enter your dwellings that you not be crushed by Solomon and his soldiers while they perceive not."*

The fact that an ant showed sincerity to its own kind highlights how important it is for people to show sincerity to each other. In addition, the fact that Allah, the Exalted, recorded the actions of this ant in His Book indicates how much He loves 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 the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themselves.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themselves in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

*“...Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them...”*

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they



can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

*“...And do good as Allah has done good to you...”*

## Becoming Grateful

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 19:

*“So [Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him]...said, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents..."”*

True gratitude is when one uses the blessings they been granted, both external and internal, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. One can become grateful when they understand that every worldly blessing they possess or desire is only a means for them to use correctly so that they can reach Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day safely.

Every worldly blessing a Muslim possesses is only a means which should aid them in reaching the hereafter safely. It is not an end in itself. For example, wealth is a means one should use in order to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, fulfilling their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. It is not an end or an ultimate goal in itself.

This not only aids a Muslim in maintaining their focus on the hereafter but it also aids them whenever they lose worldly blessings. When a Muslim treats each worldly blessing, such as a child, as a means to please Allah, the Exalted, and reach the hereafter safely then losing it will not have such a detrimental impact on them. They may become sad, which is an acceptable emotion, but they will not become grieved which leads to impatience and other mental problems, such as depression. This is because they firmly believe the worldly blessing they possessed was only a means so losing it does not cause a loss in the ultimate goal namely, Paradise, the loss of which is disastrous. Therefore, still possessing and concentrating on the ultimate goal will prevent them from becoming grieved.

In addition, they will understand that just like the thing they lost was only a means they firmly believe they will be provided with another means to reach and fulfil their ultimate goal by Allah, the Exalted. This will also prevent them from grieving. Whereas, the one who believes their worldly blessing is the end instead of a means will experience severe grief when losing it as their whole purpose and objective has been lost. This grief will lead to depression and other mental issues.

To conclude, Muslims should treat each blessing they possess as a means to reach the hereafter safely not as an end in itself. This is how one can possess things without being possessed by them. This is how they can keep worldly things in their hands and not in their hearts.

## Approved Guidance

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 19:

*“So [Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him]...said, "My Lord, enable me...to do righteousness of which You approve..."”*

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.

## Joining the True Servants

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 19:

*“So [Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him]...said, "My Lord...admit me by Your mercy into [the ranks of] Your righteous servants.”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person who imitates a people is counted as one of them.

All Muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly warns that a Muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

But those who verbally declare their love for the righteous and fail to imitate them and instead imitate the characteristics found in hypocrites and the sinful will be considered and judged as one of them. This does not mean they will lose their faith but it means they will be judged as disobedient Muslims. How can a disobedient Muslim be counted as an obedient Muslim and end up with the righteous? This is only wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 20:

*“Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise. The companions of Paradise - they are the attainers [of success].”*

## Sincerity to Leaders

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verses 20-22:

*“And he [Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him] took attendance of the birds and said, “Why do I not see the hoopoe - or is he among the absent?...”But he [i.e., the hoopoe] stayed not long and said, “I have encompassed [in knowledge] that which you have not encompassed, and I have come to you from Sheba with certain news.”*

Even though the hoopoe was initially missing from its post it proved that it did not fail to show sincerity to its leader the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him. 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 leaders of society. This includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary, such as financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found in Imam Malik’s Muwatta, book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

*“O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you...”*



This makes it clear that it is a duty to obey the leaders of society. But it is important to note, this obedience is a duty as long as one does not disobey Allah, the Exalted. There is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator. In cases like this, revolting against leaders should be avoided as it only leads to the harm of innocent people. Instead, the leaders should be gently advised good and forbidden evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should advise others to act accordingly and always supplicate for the leaders to remain on the correct path. If the leaders remain straight the general public will remain straight, also.

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in matters which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society.

## True Blessings

The next discussion is based on chapter 27 An Naml, verse 36:

*“So when they came to Solomon, he said, “Do you provide me with wealth? But what Allah has given me is better than what He has given you. Rather, it is you who rejoice in your gift.”*

This is when a queen who was invited to accept faith by the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, sent him worldly gifts in order to test his character. Muslims should understand the importance of not compromising on their faith for the sake of worldly blessings. Whatever they gain from doing so will eventually become a burden and a curse for them in both worlds. Instead, they should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, by remaining firm on their faith and values. If they do this they will be granted the same eternal success the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, was granted.

In addition, a Muslim should understand that striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and the blessings associated with it will always be greater than any worldly blessing. In fact, this is what the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, was referring to when he rejected the queen’s gifts. Religious blessings are always flawless and lasting whereas worldly blessings will always have some sort of difficulty attached to it and

they are temporary in nature. When one strives in fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience Allah, the Exalted, grants them something which the entire mankind irrespective of their faith strives night and day for namely, contentment and peace of mind. This is the ultimate goal of all people even if they have smaller aims and goals, such as travelling the world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2373, that true richness does not lie with wealth but being content with life. It is why worldly rich people do not find true peace of mind and why a poorer Muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, does. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

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

There is nothing wrong with seeking lawful wealth while avoiding excessiveness but Muslims should understand that Allah, the Exalted, did not place true peace of mind with wealth or other worldly things.

## **Excellence in Faith**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 30:

*“And to David We gave Solomon. An excellent servant...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a Muslim cannot make their Islam excellent until they avoid the things which do not concern them.

This Hadith contains an all-encompassing advice which should be applied to every aspect of one's life. It includes a person's speech as well as their other physical actions. It means that a Muslim who desires to perfect their faith must avoid those things, through speech and actions, which do not concern them. And instead they must occupy themselves with those things that do. One should take the things that concern them very seriously and strive to fulfil the responsibilities which accompany them according to the teachings of Islam solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that one would not be perfecting their faith if they avoided things according to their own thinking or desires. But the one who perfects their faith avoids the things which Islam has advised to avoid. Meaning, one should strive to fulfil all their duties, avoid all sins and the things which are disliked in Islam and even avoid the excess use of unnecessary lawful

things. Achieving this excellence is a characteristic of the excellence of faith mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one acts and worships Allah, the Exalted, as if they can observe Him or they at least become fully aware of Allah, the Exalted, observing their every thought and action. Being aware of this divine surveillance will encourage a Muslim to always abstain from sins and hasten towards righteous deeds. The one who does not avoid the things which do not concern them will not reach this level of excellence.

A major aspect of avoiding the things which do not concern a person is linked to speech. The majority of sins occur when a person utters words which do not concern them, such as backbiting and slander. The definition of vain talk is when a person utters words which may not be sinful but are useless and therefore not their concern. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2408, vain speech is hated by Allah, the Exalted. Countless arguments, fights and even physical harm have occurred simply because someone spoke about something which did not concern them. Many families have become divided; many marriages have ended because someone did not mind their business. It is why Allah, the Exalted, has advised in the Holy Quran the different types of useful speech which people should concern themselves with. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

*“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”*

In fact, uttering words which are not a person's concern will be the main reason people enter Hell. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2412, that all speech will be counted against a person unless it is connected to advising good, forbidding evil or the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. This means that all other forms of speech are not a person's concern as they will not benefit them. It is important to note, that advising good encompasses anything which is beneficial in one's worldly and religious life, such as their occupation.

Therefore, Muslims should strive to avoid the things which do not concern them through words and actions so that they can perfect their faith. Put simply, the one who dedicates time to the things which do not concern them will fail in the things which do concern them. And the one who occupies themselves with the things which do concern them will not find time to spend on the things which do not concern them. Meaning, they will achieve success through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

## Sincerity to the Lord

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 30:

*“And to David We gave Solomon...indeed he was one repeatedly turning back [to Allāh].”*

This is an aspect of sincerity to Allah, the Exalted. 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.



## Cursed

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verses 31-32:

*“[Mention] when there were exhibited before him in the afternoon the poised [standing] racehorses. And he [Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him] said, "Indeed, I gave preference to the love of good [things] over the remembrance of my Lord until it disappeared into the curtain.””*

Even though the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, was fulfilling his duty as the leader of his people, which is the indirect remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, as it involves His obedience, he indicated the importance of direct remembrance, such as the prayer.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6407, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the difference between the person who remembers Allah, the Exalted, and the one who does not is like a living person compared to a dead person.

It is important for Muslims who desire to create a strong connection with Allah, the Exalted, so that they can overcome all difficulties in this world

and in the hereafter successfully to remember Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible. Put simply, the more they remember Him the more they will achieve this vital goal.

This is achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The second is by remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue. But the highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This is achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This requires one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds.

Those who remain on the first two levels will receive reward depending on their intention but they are unlikely to increase the strength of their faith and piety unless they move to the third and highest level of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

## Defining Things

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 35:

*“He [Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him] said, “My Lord...grant me a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me...””*

It is important for Muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, Muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient.” And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves.”*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a Muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. 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.”*

## **Dedication to Allah, the Exalted**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 39:

*"[Allah, the Exalted, said to the Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him],  
"This [worldly kingdom] is Our gift, so grant or withhold without account."*

Even though this was said to the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, yet his intention for gaining and spending wealth and other worldly blessings was only to please Allah, the Exalted, unlike the majority of the wealthy Muslims today.

Unfortunately, some Muslims use the names of the righteous predecessors in the incorrect way by claiming they also earned and spent wealth. In their eyes this somehow justifies earning, hoarding or incorrectly spending wealth they do not need. Their very behaviour contradicts the actions of the righteous predecessors who only earned to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities. Those who were wealthy only spent their wealth according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, never wasting it through extravagance or hoarding it through greed. How many well-off Muslims today can say the same about themselves?

In addition, Muslims should understand that the righteous who obtained wealth were the trustees of Allah, the Exalted, on Earth. They were only the guardians of the wealth and never saw themselves as being its true owner. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 7:

*“Believe in Allah and His Messenger and spend out of that in which He has made you successive inheritors...”*

They understood why Allah, the Exalted, created them and what He desired from them. So they only spent wealth according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and never spent on things according to their own desires. These righteous people were certain that their souls and possessions belonged only to Allah, the Exalted. So they reached the highest level of gratitude by using each worldly blessing according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. These people may have been given plenty of worldly things but they did not put their trust in them. They only put their trust in Allah, the Exalted. They took no pleasure in their belongings and only saw them as a duty which needed to be discharged according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Their hearts were not attached to their belongings nor did they exclude others from enjoying the worldly blessings they possessed by greedily hoarding them. This is why they possessed worldly things but the things did not possess them. They had wealth but chose poverty for themselves as they spent to fulfil the needs of others. They took delight only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by using their worldly possessions according to His wish instead of their own. Neither did they grieve or show displeasure when they lost worldly things as they preferred the choice of Allah, the Exalted, over all things. They took no pleasure or joy in their worldly possessions. So in reality, they had abstained from the material world even though they possessed worldly

things. The possessions were in their hands not in their hearts. They understood that the true love of Allah, the Exalted, consisted of turning away from this material world with their hearts and intentions. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 131:

*“And do not extend your eyes toward that by which We have given enjoyment to [some] categories of them, [its being but] the splendor of worldly life by which We test them. And the provision of your Lord is better and more enduring.”*

This in reality is quite clear when one actually studies the lives of the righteous predecessors instead of assuming they were just businessmen. Unfortunately, many Muslims today claim to follow in their footsteps even though they drown themselves collecting and hoarding the material world. The majority of people are fooled into thinking they are following in their footsteps when they are actually nothing alike. These worldly people trust and love their possessions whereas the righteous had worldly possessions but only trusted and loved Allah, the Exalted. Worldly possessions were in the hands of the righteous predecessors not in their hearts while many today have no possessions in their hands but still have them in their hearts. One should take heed to how Allah, the Exalted, has described the material world and therefore not prioritise it over preparing for the eternal hereafter. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 20:

*“Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children...”*



## **Divine Proximity**

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 40:

*“And indeed, for him [Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him] is nearness to Us...”*

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He is with anyone who remembers Him.

With the rise of mental problems and disorders, such as depression, it is vital for Muslims to understand the importance of this declaration. There is a small chance of a person experiencing a mental issue when they are constantly surrounded and aided by someone that truly loves them. If this is true for a person it is undoubtedly more befitting for Allah, the Exalted, who has promised to be with the one who remembers Him. Acting on this declaration alone would eliminate all mental issues, such as depression. It is the reason why being secluded from others or being amongst others did not affect the mental state of the righteous predecessors as they were always in the company of Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious that when one obtains the company of Allah, the Exalted, they will overcome all obstacles and difficulties successfully until they reach His proximity in the hereafter.

In addition, out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, has not restricted this declaration in anyway. For example, He did not declare He was only with the righteous or with those who perform specific good deeds. He in fact encompassed every Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith or how many sins they have committed. So a Muslim should never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. But it is important to note the condition mentioned in this Hadith namely, to remember Allah, the Exalted. This is not only remembering Him with one's tongue but more importantly it is to remember Him through one's actions. This is only achieved by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The one who behaves in such a manner will be blessed with the company and support of Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, the more one obeys Allah, the Exalted, the more they will receive His company. What one gives is what they shall receive.

## Ending on Good

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 40:

*“And indeed, for him [Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him] is...a good place of return.”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7232, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people will be resurrected on Judgment Day in the same state they died on Earth.

This means that if a person dies on good they will be resurrected on good. But if they die on evil they will be raised in an evil way.

A Muslim should not live in heedlessness by believing just because they have faith in Islam it guarantees they will die and therefore be raised in a good state on Judgment Day. If they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then die in this state without sincerely repenting then they will be raised in an evil way. It does not take a scholar to determine what will happen to this person on Judgment Day.

From this Hadith one can understand that the way they will die will be in the same state they have lived. Meaning, if they lived in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will die in a good state and therefore be raised in a good state which includes being raised with the righteous as they practically followed in their footsteps. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

A Muslim should therefore not walk the path to Hell by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and believe that they will somehow be raised with the pious and end up in Paradise.

## **Holy Prophet Ilyas, peace be upon him**

### **Role of Holy Prophets, peace be upon them**

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 123:

*“And indeed, Elias was from among the messengers.”*

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is for them to be sincerely obeyed and followed. 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 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.

## **Advising Good and Denouncing Evil**

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 124:

*“When he [Prophet Ilyas, peace be upon him] said to his people, “Will you not fear Allah?””*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2686, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that failing to fulfill the important duty of commanding good and forbidding evil can be understood with the example of a boat with two levels full of people. The people on the lower level keep disturbing the people on the upper level whenever they desire to access water. So they decide to drill a hole in the lower level so that they can access water directly. If the people on the upper level fail to stop them they will all surely drown.

It is important for Muslims to never give up commanding good and forbidding evil according to their knowledge in a gentle way. A Muslim should never believe that as long as they obey Allah, the Exalted, other misguided people will not be able to affect them in a negative way. A good apple will eventually get affected when placed with rotten apples. Similarly, the Muslim who fails to command others to do good will eventually be effected by their negative behavior whether it is subtle or apparent. Even if the wider society has become heedless one should never give up advising



their dependents such as their family as not only will their negative behavior affect them more but this is a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. Even if a Muslim is ignored by others they should discharge their duty by persistently advising them in a gentle way which is supported by strong evidence and knowledge. Only in this way will they be protected from their negative effects and pardoned on the Day of Judgment. But if they only care about themselves and ignore the actions of others it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance.

## The Only Creator

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verses 124-125:

*“When he [Prophet Ilyas, peace be upon him] said to his people, “...Do you call upon Ba‘l [an idol] and leave the best of creators.””*

Allah, the Exalted, is Al Khaliq, which means the Creator, Al Baari which means the Maker and Al Musawwir which means the Fashioner.

The Creator is the One who brings something into existence. In reality, there is no Creator except Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One who creates without any aid from another. On other hand, an inventor only invents things through the aid of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 96:

*“While Allah created you and that which you do?”*

The Maker is the One who arranges all of the creation and prepares them for receiving the forms He has chosen for them which is linked to the next divine name mentioned earlier namely, the Fashioner.

The Creator makes things manifest. The Maker chooses their shape, appearance, and time of creation. The Fashioner fashions the creation according to His divine will.

After understanding these divine names a Muslim must trust Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. If Allah, the Exalted, created and manages the entire universe He is more than capable in sorting out a person's problems. In addition, these names indicate that Allah, the Exalted, is the One who creates and chooses all things. So a Muslim should not challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to nothing except disappointment. It is therefore better to submit obediently and patiently await relief knowing that Allah, the Exalted, only decrees the best for His servants even if this wisdom is not obvious to them. As a Muslim is short sighted it is better to trust in the Creator whose wisdom has no limits. 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.”*

## The Lord of All

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verses 124-126:

*“When he [Prophet Ilyas, peace be upon him] said to his people, “...Do you call upon Ba’l [an idol] and leave...Allah, your Lord and the Lord of your first forefathers?””*

This verse is connected to chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

*“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], “Am I not your Lord?” They said, “Yes, we have testified.” [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, “Indeed, we were of this unaware.””*

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all Muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere

obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a Muslim has a choice between pleasing Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows Muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace

between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for Muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments, enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person's heart indicates that it is a duty on Muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a Muslim. Certainty of faith allows a Muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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...”*

## Total Love

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 129:

*“And We left for him [Prophet Ilyas, peace be upon him, favorable mention] among later generations.”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4102, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised how to obtain the love of Allah, the Exalted, and the love of people.

The love of Allah, the Exalted, is obtained when one avoids the excess of this material world which are beyond their needs. Meaning, a Muslim should strive in this world in order to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. And they should strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anything from the material world which aids one in these things is not in reality a worldly thing. Therefore, avoiding them is not required. But one must avoid those things which either hinder or prevent them from fulfilling these duties. This is how a Muslim can keep the world in their hand and not in their heart. This is how a Muslim obtains the love of Allah, the Exalted, as this attitude causes them to strive in His

obedience which attracts the love of Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

Finally, a Muslim can obtain the love of people by avoiding and desiring their worldly possessions. In reality, a person only behaves negatively towards others when they feel others actively desire their possessions or when others actively compete for the worldly things they themselves desire. Meaning, the fear of losing what one possesses and losing out on the things which they desire through competition with others can lead to negative feelings towards others. If a Muslim instead occupies themselves with acting on the first part of this Hadith it will prevent them from competing for the excess worldly things others desire as the vast majority of these desires are for unnecessary worldly things. And if a Muslim keeps their harm away from the self and possessions of others which according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, is the sign of a true believer, then they will gain the love of people also.



## Gaining Peace

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 130:

*“Peace upon Elias.”*

Throughout the divine scriptures there are many examples which indicate that a person shall be treated according to how they act. For example, in one verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, declares that He will remember the person who remembers Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152.

*“So remember Me; I will remember you.”*

Another example is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 40:

*“...fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me]...”*

Finally, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever shows mercy to others will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is quite obvious that people strive in this material world as they desire peace of mind and contentment. In light of the earlier discussion, peace in one's life is often achieved when a person allows others to live in peace. If one reflects on their own life they will realise that people can be split into two categories: those who mind their business and allow others to live in peace and those who do not. It does not take a genius to figure out that those who let others live in peace are the ones who gain peace. Whereas, members of the other group never find peace irrespective of how many worldly blessings they may possess. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3976, that a Muslim cannot perfect their Islam until they avoid things which do not concern them. Those who ignore this advice and busy themselves with interfering with other people are the ones who never find peace. As they deprive others of peace in turn Allah, the Exalted, deprives them of it.

Therefore, a large step towards achieving peace of mind is to let others live in peace. It is important to note, this does not mean one should abandon commanding good and forbidding evil as this is an important duty. But it means that those things which are not sinful should be left alone as constantly chiding others on issues which are not unlawful only leads to enmity and the loss of peace in peoples' lives. There was a day and age when people loved being advised by others on all lawful and unlawful matters even if this meant they were being chided as they desired to reform

themselves for the better. But that day has long passed. Nowadays, most people dislike being chided over the unlawful let alone those things which are lawful yet undesirable. So it is best to avoid this attitude if one desires to gain a bit of peace in their life.

To conclude, the one who lets others live in peace shall be granted peace by Allah, the Exalted.

## Goodness

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verses 130-131:

*“Peace upon Elias. Indeed, We thus reward the doers of good.”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many Muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly they must also treat others with good character otherwise they will not succeed as the only truly successful people are the believers.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of

their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be rewarded like the Muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

## **Good Belief**

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verses 130-132:

*“Peace upon Elias...Indeed, he was of Our believing servants.”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true Muslim and a true believer. A true Muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A Muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a Muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a Muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

## Strive for Piety

The next discussion is based on chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 85:

*“And...Elias - and all were of the righteous.”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful.

Piety can be summed up to mean fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, 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 includes treating others how one desires to be treated by people.

An aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things take a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful. And the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the



one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things and only uses lawful things will protect their religion and honor.

If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, it occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech meaning, speech which derives no benefit nor is it a sin, often leads to evil speech such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoided the first step by not indulging in vain speech they would avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to adopt piety as described earlier, a branch of which is to avoid vain and doubtful things out of fear they will lead to the unlawful.

## **Holy Prophet Al Yasa, peace be upon him**

### **Gaining Preference**

The next discussion is based on chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 86:

*“And...Elisha [Prophet Al Yasa, peace be upon him]...We preferred over the worlds.”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1660, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned the two most virtuous people. The first is the one who sincerely strives in the way of Allah, the Exalted.

This includes striving against one's own evil desires and the evil desires of others and instead remaining firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This includes fulfilling one's duties towards Allah, the Exalted, as described and one's duties towards people for example, striving in this material world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And it includes

gently commanding good and forbidding evil according to Islamic knowledge. A Muslim will not fulfill this Hadith until they fulfill both aspects of their duties.

The second person mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the one who secludes themselves from society thereby, keeping their evil away from people and remains firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim is not allowed to behave in this manner if they possess dependents as neglecting them is a sin. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692.

In addition, one should not avoid people in order to be safe from their evil they should instead do so to keep their own evil away from people. As the former attitude can lead to pride where a person believes they are righteous while all others are sinful. It is important to remember that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take someone to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Reducing socializing with people can lead to great good as it reduces the chances of a Muslim committing sins through their speech and actions.

In addition, it will free their time up to learn and act on Islamic knowledge which leads to true and lasting success in both worlds. But the more one unnecessarily interacts with others the more chance of committing sins and the more preoccupied they will become with worldly things. Benefit might be obtained by interacting with people but in this day and age it is far safer to avoid socializing unnecessarily.

## Being Superior

The next discussion is based on chapter 38 Saad, verse 48:

*“And remember...Elisha [Prophet Al Yasa, peace be upon him]...and all are among the outstanding.”*

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4119, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the best people are those who remind others of Allah, the Exalted, when they are observed.

This does not refer to those who adopt an Islamic outward appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf, as many of these people do not remind others of Allah, the Exalted, at all. This Hadith refers to those who learn and act on Islamic knowledge so that they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the purification of one's heart which leads to the purification of their outward limbs. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984. This will cause others to remember Allah, the Exalted, when they observe these righteous Muslims. And this remembrance will only increase when these righteous Muslims speak as they only speak in ways

pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they avoid evil and vain speech and only speak on beneficial matters in respect to the world and the hereafter. This remembrance further increases when one observes their actions as they practically implement the teachings of Islam thereby, acting only in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. For example, they love, dislike, give and withhold only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

## **Holy Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him**

### **Sincere Repentance**

The next discussion is based on chapter 10 Yunus, verse 98:

*“Then has there not been a [single] city that believed so its faith benefited it except the people of Jonah [Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him]? When they believed, We removed from them the punishment of disgrace in worldly life...”*

The nation of the Holy Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him, repented as divine punishment descended but before it enveloped them as repenting at this time has no value. Muslims should therefore take advantage of the time they have been given by sincerely repenting before they reach a time it will not be accepted from them.

A divine Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3540, advises the importance and vastness of the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. The first part of the Hadith declares that as long as a Muslim sincerely supplicates to Allah, the Exalted, and hope's in His mercy they will be forgiven by Him.

This response has in fact been guaranteed for all lawful supplications in the Holy Quran not just for the supplication of forgiveness. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

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

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned this verse and declared that supplication is an act of worship meaning, a righteous deed. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1479. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604, advises that every supplication is accepted in different ways as long as it is a lawful one. The person is either granted what they requested or a reward will be reserved for them in the hereafter or they will be forgiven an equivalent sin. But it is important to note, that in order to receive a positive response a Muslim must fulfil the conditions and the etiquettes of the supplication.

One of the greatest supplications a Muslim can make is for forgiveness as it is a means for one obtaining blessings, avoiding difficulties in this world and a means to obtaining Paradise and escaping Hell in the next world. Chapter 71 Nuh, verses 10-12:

*“And said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in [continuing] showers. And give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers.’”*

As indicated by the main Hadith under discussion having hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, when supplicating is a condition for forgiveness. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, acts according to His servant's opinion of Him, which has been confirmed in a divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

One of the greatest causes of forgiveness is when a Muslim only hopes in Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them full well knowing no one can forgive them or protect them from punishment except Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that no matter how many sins a person commits the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is greater. In fact, it is unlimited therefore a person's limited sins will never be able to overcome it. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to magnify what they supplicate for as nothing is too great for Allah, the Exalted, to grant. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6812.



The next part of the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of sincerely seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, which has been mentioned in many verses and other Hadiths. This act of seeking forgiveness is a part of sincere repentance. It can be understood that seeking forgiveness is an act of the tongue while the rest of sincere repentance involves turning away from the sin through actions. It also includes feeling genuine remorse, making a firm promise not to commit the sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. It is important to note, that not persisting on the same sin is a condition for the repentance to be accepted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 135:

*“And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know.”*

It is extremely important for a Muslim to be persistent in seeking forgiveness as this leads to deliverance from every worry, a way out from every difficulty and support from places where one would not expect. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1518.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the greatest cause of forgiveness namely, not associating anything to Allah, the Exalted. There are two types of associating things with Allah, the Exalted: major polytheism and minor polytheism. The major type is when one worships things other than Allah, the Exalted, or in addition to Him. The

minor version is when one acts for the sake of anyone except Allah, the Exalted, such as showing off. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. In fact, the one who acts for the sake of people will be told by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day to seek their reward from those they acted for, which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. The one who acts in this way will find that they will eventually be exposed in this world and no matter how well they treat others they will never gain their real love or respect because of their bad intention. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6705.

When one realises the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, they only think, act and speak for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, out of fear and love for Him. This behaviour minimises the chances of committing sins and whatever sins do occur will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. It is the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3797, that the statement there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, removes all wrong actions.

This is the behaviour all Muslims must strive to adopt. The foundation of it is fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

## Importance of Pausing

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 87:

*“And [mention] the man of the fish [Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him], when he went off in anger [from his people] and thought that We would not decree [anything] upon him...”*

The Holy Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him, left his nation when they crossed all lines of disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, and when it was clear that divine punishment was going to descend on them. He made a scholarly judgement to leave his nation before waiting for permission from Allah, the Exalted, to do so. Even though he did not commit a sin he was still reprimanded because of his high status of being a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them.

Muslims must learn to pause and reflect before acting as hastiness can lead them to trouble in both worlds.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2012, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking things through is from Allah, the Exalted, while being hasty is from the Devil.

This is an extremely important teaching to understand and act on as Muslims who perform much righteous deeds often destroy them through hastiness. For example, they may utter some evil words in a fit of rage which may cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

The vast majority of sins and difficulties, such as arguments, occur because people fail to think things through and instead act in a hasty way. The sign of intelligence is when one thinks before speaking or acting and only precedes when they know their speech or action is good and beneficial in worldly or religious matters.

Even though, a Muslim should not delay in performing righteous deeds yet, they should still think things through before performing them. This is because a righteous deed may receive no reward simply because its conditions and etiquettes have not been fulfilled because of one's hastiness. In this respect, one should only move forward in any matter after they have thought things through.

The one who behaves in this manner will not only minimize their sins and increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, but they will minimize the difficulties they encounter, such as arguments and disagreements, in all aspects of their life.

## **Divine Succor**

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verses 87-88:

*“...And he [Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him] called out within the darkneses, "There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers." So We responded to him and saved him from the distress. And thus do We save the believers.”*

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]...”*

## **Following Prophethood**

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 139:

*“And indeed, Jonah [Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him] was among the messengers.”*

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is for them to be sincerely obeyed and followed. 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 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.

## Being Swallowed

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 Saffat, verse 142:

*“Then the fish swallowed him [Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him]...”*

This event discusses the Holy Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him, when he was swallowed by a whale after leaving his community without prior permission from Allah, the Exalted. In reality, many Muslims are in a similar situation to the Holy Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him, as they have been swallowed and entrapped by their desires and love of this material world which has distracted them from preparing for the hereafter and only leads to many mental disorders, such as depression. The only way to escape from them is by placing everything in its rightful place. One does not need to abandon the material world but instead prioritise the things according to the priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, through His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Muslims only get trapped and distracted by worldly things because they rearrange this priority order. For example, some parents go overboard in respect to raising their children by fulfilling all their desires even if it means they utilize the unlawful. When one acts in this way this relationship will entrap them and prevent them from obtaining the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This will still occur even if they offer their obligatory prayers as Islam and the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, extends to all aspects of one's life not just an hour or two during the day. One can only avoid this type of extreme behaviour when they learn and act on the Holy Quran and traditions of the

Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as the very aim of these divine teachings is to guide Muslims to organise and prioritise their worldly and religious lives correctly so that they obtain maximum benefit from both while being content and pleased. The one who turns away from this will find that they end up being trapped within one belly of desires after another until they leave this world while being unsatisfied and unhappy with their life. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 87:

*"...And he called out within the darkneses, "There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers."*

## Help in Remembrance

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 Saffat, verses 143-144:

*“And had he [Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him] not been of those who exalt Allah. He would have remained inside its belly [of the fish] until the Day they are resurrected.”*

These verses indicate that correctly remembering Allah, the Exalted, leads to the removal of difficulties.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6407, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the difference between the person who remembers Allah, the Exalted, and the one who does not is like a living person compared to a dead person.

It is important for Muslims who desire to create a strong connection with Allah, the Exalted, so that they can overcome all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter successfully to remember Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible. Put simply, the more they remember Him the more they will achieve this vital goal.

This is achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The second is by remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue. But the highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This is achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This requires one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds.

Those who remain on the first two levels will receive reward depending on their intention but they are unlikely to increase the strength of their faith and piety unless they move to the third and highest level of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

## **An Exit**

The next discussion is based on chapter 37 Saffat, verses 142-146:

*“Then the fish swallowed him [Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him]...And had he not been of those who exalt Allah. He would have remained inside its belly until the Day they are resurrected. But We threw him onto the open shore while he was ill. And We caused to grow over him a gourd vine.”*

This event teaches Muslims that whenever they encounter a difficult situation they should remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, trusting that He will provide them a way out of it even if this seems impossible at the time. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

*“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”*

A Muslim should understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best for His servants even if the wisdoms behind the difficulty are not obvious. It is a person's reaction which either leads to blessings or the anger of Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to reflect on the countless examples in their own life where they believed something was bad only to change their mind

later on and vice versa. This is just like when a person takes a bitter medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. Even though the medicine is bitter they still take it believing it will benefit them. It is strange how a Muslim can trust a doctor whose knowledge is limited and who is not absolutely certain the bitter medicine will benefit them and fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge is infinite and when He only decrees the best for His servants.

A Muslim should understand the difference between wishful thinking and trust in Allah, the Exalted. The person who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, and then expects Him to help them in difficulties is a wishful thinker. The one who will gain the help of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated in this great event, is the one who sincerely strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience and then trusts His judgment without complaining or questioning His choice.

## **Strive to be Chosen**

The next discussion is based on chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 50:

*“And his [Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him] Lord chose him and made him of the righteous.”*

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 a Muslim can only draw close to Him through fulfilling their obligatory duties. And they can achieve the love of Allah, the Exalted, through voluntary righteous deeds.

This description splits the servants of Allah, the Exalted, into two categories. The first group draws near to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer, and in respect to people, such as the obligatory charity. This can be summed up by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.



The second category of those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, are superior to the first group as they not only fulfil their obligatory duties but strive in voluntary righteous deeds. This clearly shows that this is the only path to the proximity of Allah, the Exalted. Whoever takes a path other than this will not achieve this vital goal. This completely rejects the concept of obtaining sainthood without striving in obedience to Allah, the Exalted. The person who claims this is simply a liar. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body becomes pure. This leads to righteous deeds. So if a person does not perform righteous deeds, such as their obligatory duties, then their body is impure which means their spiritual heart is impure as well. This person can never reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, the greatest voluntary righteous deeds one can perform are those based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anyone who chooses to perform voluntary righteous deeds not based on his traditions has been fooled by the Devil as no path will take one close to Allah, the Exalted, except the path and actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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....”*

The pious Muslims who belong in the second higher group are also those who avoid unnecessary things of this material world. This attitude aids

them in focusing their efforts on performing voluntary righteous deeds. It is this group who have perfected their faith by loving, hating, giving and withholding all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds Allah, the Exalted, 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.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this Muslim's supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.

## **Holy Prophet Zakariya, peace be upon him**

### **A Religious Inheritance**

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verses 4-6:

*“He [Prophet Zakariya, peace be upon him] said, “My Lord, indeed my bones have weakened, and my head has filled with white, and never have I been in my supplication to You, my Lord, unhappy [i.e., disappointed]. And indeed, I fear the successors after me, and my wife has been barren, so give me from Yourself an heir. Who will inherit me and inherit from the family of Jacob. And make him, my Lord, pleasing [to You].”*

This supplication of the Holy Prophet Zakariya, peace be upon him, teaches Muslims some etiquettes of supplicating to Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should recognise their innate weakness and demonstrate this through actions and words just like the Holy Prophet Zakariya, peace be upon him, did. This is an aspect of humility which increases the chances of a supplication being accepted.

In addition, one should fulfil an important aspect of gratitude which is to mention the blessings of Allah, the Exalted, during their supplication which leads to an increase in blessings when it is supported by gratitude shown in one's actions. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

Even though, there is nothing wrong with asking for lawful worldly things a Muslim should not be fooled into believing this is what the Holy Prophet Zakariya, peace be upon him, done. He did not supplicate for a child who would carry on his name which the vast majority of Muslims do. He instead requested for a Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, who would continue his mission in spreading the word of Allah, the Exalted. So in fact, he did not request for a worldly thing but a religious blessing from Allah, the Exalted. The inheritance mentioned in this supplication refers to this religious mission and not to worldly things as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, do not leave wealth as inheritance instead they only leave behind knowledge. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223.

This great event also teaches Muslims to correct their intention meaning, the things they desire should be connected to the hereafter and not only to the material world. For example, a married couple should desire a child for the purpose of increasing the number of the obedient servants of Allah, the Exalted, on Earth and not for worldly reasons. And this intention should be supported and proven by one's actions such as being patient when they

request is not fulfilled. A Muslim who desires religious things only does so in order to please Allah, the Exalted. And if Allah, the Exalted, chooses not to grant that thing to them they should accept His choice with patience as this is what pleases Allah, the Exalted.

## **Remembering Allah, the Exalted, Much**

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 41:

*"[Allah, the Exalted, said to the Prophet Zakariya, peace be upon him]...And remember your Lord much and exalt [Him with praise] in the evening and the morning."*

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He is with anyone who remembers Him.

With the rise of mental problems and disorders, such as depression, it is vital for Muslims to understand the importance of this declaration. There is a small chance of a person experiencing a mental issue when they are constantly surrounded and aided by someone that truly loves them. If this is true for a person it is undoubtedly more befitting for Allah, the Exalted, who has promised to be with the one who remembers Him. Acting on this declaration alone would eliminate all mental issues, such as depression. It is the reason why being secluded from others or being amongst others did not affect the mental state of the righteous predecessors as they were always in the company of Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious that when one obtains the company of Allah, the Exalted, they will overcome all obstacles and difficulties successfully until they reach His proximity in the hereafter.

In addition, out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, has not restricted this declaration in anyway. For example, He did not declare He was only with the righteous or with those who perform specific good deeds. He in fact encompassed every Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith or how many sins they have committed. So a Muslim should never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. But it is important to note the condition mentioned in this Hadith namely, to remember Allah, the Exalted. This is not only remembering Him with one's tongue but more importantly it is to remember Him through one's actions. This is only achieved by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The one who behaves in such a manner will be blessed with the company and support of Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, the more one obeys Allah, the Exalted, the more they will receive His company. What one gives is what they shall receive.



## A Great Gift

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 7:

*“[He was told], "O Zechariah, indeed We give you good tidings of a boy whose name will be John..."”*

It is important for Muslims to follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Zakariya, peace be upon him, by raising their children in the correct way.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1952, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most virtuous gift a parent can give their child is to teach them good character.

This Hadith reminds Muslims to be more concerned about the faith of their relatives, such as their children, over acquiring and imparting wealth and properties to them. It is important to understand, worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example is the great empire of

Pharaoh. Unfortunately, many Muslims are so concerned about teaching their children how to build an empire and acquire much wealth and properties that they neglect teaching them the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes good manners towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. A Muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for teaching their children good manners as their moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly.

In addition, it is extremely difficult to teach good manners to children when they get older and become set in their ways. Today is the day a Muslim should truly reflect on the gift they wish to impart to their children and relatives. This is how a Muslim sends forward good to the hereafter but also leaves good behind as a righteous child which supplicates for their deceased parent benefits them. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted.

## **Rushing to Good**

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 90:

*“...Indeed, they [family of Prophet Zakariya, peace be upon him] used to hasten to good deeds...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2306, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to hasten in performing righteous deeds before seven things occur.

The first is overwhelming poverty. This can refer to financial difficulties which distract a person from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. In addition, stressing over wealth can even push one towards the unlawful. A Muslim should remember that any righteous deed rooted in the unlawful will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. Allah, the Exalted, has allocated provision for the entire creation over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Therefore, a Muslim should trust that their lawful provision will reach them as long as they continue to strive for it in lawful ways according to the teachings of Islam. A Muslim should remember that Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants

according to His infinite wisdom. He does not give according to someone's desires as this will most likely lead to their destruction. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

And 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..."*

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims should hasten in performing righteous deeds before they become distracted by wealth. Wealth itself is not evil but depending on how one obtains it and uses it can either make it a great blessing for them or a great burden for them in both worlds. If a Muslim strives to obtain excess wealth while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people while hoarding or mispending their wealth it will become a great curse for them in both worlds. But if a Muslim obtains enough to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance and spends in other ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, then they will achieve true richness in both worlds.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion which prevents righteous actions is a debilitating sickness. This is a warning to make use of one's good health before they encounter sickness. One should observe those who have lost their good health either through sickness or through ageing and therefore make use of the good health they possess by striving to gain success in lawful worldly matters as well as religious matters while giving priority to religion over the world. For example, a Muslim should use their good health to journey to the Mosques regularly in order to offer their obligatory prayers with congregation before a time comes when they desire to do this but do not possess the physical strength to do so. The amazing thing about utilizing one's good health correctly is that when a Muslim eventually loses it Allah, the Exalted, will continue to grant them the same reward they used to receive when doing good deeds during their time of good health. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. But those who live in heedlessness fail to utilise their good health and therefore receive no reward during their good health or when they fall ill.

This is connected to the next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion namely, senility. A Muslim should make use of their youth and strong intelligence before they reach senility. This includes gaining and acting on knowledge and using one's mental strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It is important to behave in this manner before senility occurs as even the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sought refuge from senility in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6390.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion which prevents righteous actions is a sudden death. Death is certain but the time is unknown. A Muslim should not live in heedlessness believing that their death is far away as countless people have and will die long before reaching their life expectancy. Nor should they live in such a way as if they are not going to die at all. Having hopes of a long life can be considered the root of all evil as it causes one to delay performing righteous deeds believing they can always perform them tomorrow. It causes them to delay sincere repentance thereby, failing to change for the better believing they can do this tomorrow. And having hopes for a long life causes one to prioritize obtaining worldly things, such as wealth, in order to make their expected long life on this Earth comfortable. These prevent one from preparing adequately for the hereafter. Muslims should therefore reduce their hope for a long life so that they change for the better and direct their focus to the permanent hereafter. Muslims should not delay and instead act today as the tomorrow they hope for may never arrive. They should also strive to perform the righteous deeds which will benefit them in case their life ends unexpectedly, such as an ongoing charity, which benefits others as long as the thing is being used, such as a water well. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the arrival of the anti-Christ. This event will prevent one from performing righteous deeds and instead tempt them towards disbelief. One lesson to learn from this is the importance of avoiding doubtful things. Just like a person who journeys close to a border is more likely to cross it similarly, a Muslim who is surrounded by temptations will more likely be led astray and fail to perform righteous deeds. The one who avoids places and things which tempt them to commit sins will protect their faith and honour. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. Muslims

should therefore guard their faith by avoiding things, places and the people who invite or tempt them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and ensure their dependents, such as their children, do the same.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion which prevents one from performing righteous deeds is the Final Hour.

This is when the trumpet blast will occur. The trumpet blast will lead to the death of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7381. The important thing to learn is that this is a call which no one can or will reject responding to. It will lead to the resurrection and final judgment. Therefore, Muslims should respond to the call of Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through sincere obedience by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verse 24:

*“O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life...”*

Whoever responds to this call in this world will find the final call easy to endure and respond to. Whereas, the one who lives heedless to the call of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will not find peace in this world and they will

be forced to answer the call of the trumpet which will be a great burden for them to endure and respond to. A person can only ignore the call of Allah, the Exalted, for so long as the final call will occur, sooner or later, and no one will be able to avoid or ignore it. If this is inevitable it makes sense that one respond to it now, today, instead of living in heedlessness. If one hears the trumpet blast while heedless no action or regret will benefit them and what comes after for this person will be even more terrifying.



## Heart of Worship

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 90:

*“...Indeed, they [family of Prophet Zakariya, peace be upon him] used to... supplicate Us in hope and fear...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3371, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that supplication is the essence of worship.

This is because it is a practical demonstration of humility and one's servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, as it is befitting for the servant to ask from the Master.

It is important to know that according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604, every good supplication is accepted in three ways. It is either fulfilled, the equivalent reward is given in the hereafter or an equivalent evil is removed from one's life.

In chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60, Allah, the Exalted, guarantees a response to all those who perform supplication. Therefore, one should always bear this in mind and persist in supplications.

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

Even before supplicating one should ensure their earnings are lawful and what they consume is lawful. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2989, that the supplication of a person who earns and consumes the unlawful will never be accepted.

The first etiquette of supplication is that one should try to face the Qibla when supplicating. This was the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. An example of this action is found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2899.

One should raise their hands begging Allah, the Exalted, to fulfill their desire as this was the practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1030.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, is too shy and generous to turn away a beggar empty handed who raises their hands to Him.

One should begin and conclude their supplication by first praising Allah, the Exalted, and then sending blessings upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1481.

In fact, as mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 486, a person's supplication remains suspended between the Heavens and the Earth until they send blessings upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

One should praise Allah, the Exalted, with phrases mentioned in the Holy Quran or the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The beautiful names of Allah, the Exalted, are found extensively throughout these divine teachings and should be utilised. For example, chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 24:

*“He is Allah, the Creator, the Producer, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names...”*

The best supplications are found in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and therefore should be used. For example, chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 41:

*“Our Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers the Day the account is established.”*

But it is absolutely acceptable to supplicate for specific things as long as they are lawful.

As advised in the Holy Quran one should supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, with humility hoping for His mercy and in fear of His greatness. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 56:

*“...And invoke Him in fear and aspiration...”*

It is vital to supplicate with enthusiasm full well believing Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil one's needs. In addition, as advised in a Hadith found in Jami At

Tirmidhi, number 3479, Allah, the Exalted, does not respond to someone who supplicates while heedless or distracted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3505, that when the following verse of the Holy Quran is recited the supplication is always accepted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 87:

*“...There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.”*

One should seal their supplication with the word, Ameen, as this ensures its acceptance. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 938.

After the supplication is concluded it is a practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to wipe one's hands over their face. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1492.

Finally, one should be persistent in supplicating as giving up is a hasty action which can lead to the supplication being unfulfilled. This warning is given in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3387.

One should make it a habit to remember Allah, the Exalted, in times of ease so that Allah, the Exalted, will help them in times of difficulty. This is advised in a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803. As advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3499, Allah, the Exalted, readily accepts the supplication made after the obligatory prayers and in the last part of the night. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6321, advises that in the last part of the night the divine descent occurs at which point Allah, the Exalted, calls out and responds to supplications. There is a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 521, which advises that the supplication between the two call to prayers is never rejected. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that a Muslim is closest to Allah, the Exalted, while they are prostrating and they should therefore supplicate to Him at this time. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1138. As mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1046, there is an hour during every Friday where Allah, the Exalted, readily accepts supplications. When a fasting person breaks their fast their supplication is also accepted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1753. One should ask the sick to supplicate for them as it has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1441, that their supplications are like the supplications of the Angels. The supplication made when drinking Zamzam water is always accepted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3062. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2540, advises that the supplication at the time when it rains is accepted. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534, encourages people to supplicate for others in their absence as they are readily accepted. If one is facing any form of oppression they should supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, as they will be accepted. This has been

advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1905. This same Hadith advises that the supplication of the traveller is never rejected. Finally, one should encourage their parents to supplicate for them as they are readily accepted. This is supported by a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3862.

Some do not regularly supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, as they claim that He is All Aware and requires no one to inform Him of their desires. Even though, this is a fact it is better to supplicate as this is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them all, and has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

*“And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you.” Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible.”*

Supplicating is an excellent way to demonstrate one’s humility and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In fact, as mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3370, nothing is more honourable to Allah, the Exalted, than supplication. Finally, Allah, the Exalted, becomes angry when a person does not supplicate to Him as it may indicate they believe they are independent of Allah, the Exalted, which is not true. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3373.

## Humility

The next discussion is based on chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 90:

*“...Indeed, they [family of Prophet Zakariya, peace be upon him]...were to Us humbly submissive.”*

The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. And any evil they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them Muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bares this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themselves if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches Muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet



Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles himself before Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 215:

*“And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers.”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63, shows that humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

*“And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly...”*

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

*“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”*

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom’s worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

## **Holy Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him**

### **Supporting Others in Good**

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 39:

*“...Indeed, Allah gives you good tidings of John [Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him], confirming a word from Allah...”*

The word of Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him, confirmed and supported was the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, who Allah, the Exalted, created with a divine command. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 59:

*“Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created him from dust; then He said to him, "Be," and he was.”*

Since the passing of the righteous predecessors the strength of the Muslim nation has weakened dramatically. It is logical that the greater the number of people in a group the stronger the group will become yet Muslims have somehow defied this logic. The strength of the Muslim nation has only decreased as the number of Muslims have increased. One of the main reasons this has occurred is connected to chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2 of the Holy Quran:

*"...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression..."*

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands Muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many Muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many Muslims now observe who is doing an action instead of observing what they are doing. If the person is linked to them for example, a relative, they support them even if the thing is not good. Similarly, if the person has no relationship with them they turn away from supporting them even if the thing is good. This attitude completely contradicts the traditions of the righteous predecessors. They would support others in good irrespective of who was doing it. In fact, they went so far on acting on this verse of the Holy Quran that they would even support those they did not get on with as long as it was a good thing.

The other thing connected to this is that many Muslims fail to support each other in good as they believe the person they are supporting will gain more prominence than them. This condition has even affected scholars and

Islamic educational institutes. They make lame excuses not to aid others in good as they do not have a relationship with them and they fear their own institution will be forgotten and those they help will gain further respect in society. But this is completely wrong as one only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the truth. As long as one's intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, supporting others in good will increase their respect within society. Allah, the Exalted, will cause the hearts of the people to turn to them even if their support is for another organisation, institution or person. For example, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed this world Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily challenged for the Caliphate and would have found plenty of support in his favour. But he knew the right thing to do was to nominate Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not worry about being forgotten by society if he supported another person. He instead obeyed the command in the verse mentioned earlier and supported what was right. This is confirmed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. The honour and respect of Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, within society only increased by this action. This is obvious to those who are aware of Islamic history.

Muslims must reflect on this deeply, change their mentality and strive to aid others in good irrespective of who is doing it and not hold back fearing their support will cause them to be forgotten within society. Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will never be forgotten in both this world and the next. In fact, their respect and honour will only grow in both worlds.

## **Becoming Honorable**

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 39:

*“...Indeed, Allah gives you good tidings of John [Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him]...and [who will be] honorable...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated some important characteristics for Muslims to adopt.

The first is that the best worshipper is the one who avoids the unlawful. This includes avoiding all forms of verbal and physical sins. It includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, as abandoning them is unlawful. A Muslim must never obtain and utilize unlawful provision, such as wealth, as this will cause all of their righteous deeds to be rejected as the foundation of good deeds must be lawful. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. A Muslim should avoid doubtful things as this often leads to the unlawful. Avoiding what creates doubt will safeguard one's faith and honor. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that the richest person is the one who is satisfied with what Allah, the Exalted,

has granted them. The one who is always in need of more worldly things is needy, which is another word for poor, even if they possess much wealth. But the one who is pleased with what they possess is not needy and is therefore rich even if they possess little wealth or worldly things.

In addition, the one who is pleased with what Allah, the Exalted, has granted them will be provided with grace which will ensure their possessions fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents and it will grant them peace of mind and body. Whereas, those who are not pleased will not obtain this grace which will cause them to feel as if their possessions are not enough to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents. This will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind and body.

Satisfaction includes being pleased with what Allah, the Exalted, has chosen for a person namely, destiny. A Muslim should firmly believe Allah, the Exalted, always chooses what is best for His servant even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the choice. 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.”*

If a Muslim concentrates on obeying Allah, the Exalted, in every situation, such as patience in times of difficulty and gratitude in times of ease, they will be provided with peace of mind.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that the sign of a true believer is being kind to one's neighbour. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once connected belief in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgment Day to treating a neighbour kindly. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 174. This Hadith alone is enough to indicate the seriousness of failing to treat neighbours kindly. A Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 119, warns that a woman who fulfilled her obligatory duties and offered much voluntary worship would go to Hell because she mistreated her neighbours through her speech. If this is the case for the one who harms their neighbour through words can one imagine the seriousness of physically harming one's neighbour?

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a true Muslim loves for others what they love for themselves. It is important to show this practically not just declare it through words. A Muslim must strive to aid others according to their means, such as emotional and physical help, just like they desire others to help them. This will cause them to obtain the support of Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225. The same way a Muslim would like their self and possessions to be safe from the verbal and physical harm of others, which is the characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, a Muslim must treat others in the same way.

The last thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that too much laughter kills the spiritual heart. This mentality demands one to always think and discuss funny issues and avoid serious issues. The matter of preparing for death and the hereafter are serious issues and if



one avoids thinking about and discussing them then they will never correctly prepare for them. This will lead to a dead spiritual heart.

## Chaste

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 39:

*“...Indeed, Allah gives you good tidings of John [Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him]...and [who will be]...chaste...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6474, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, guaranteed Paradise to the person who safeguards their mouth and chastity.

The first thing mentioned indicates safeguarding one's speech. Meaning, a Muslim must avoid all types of evil speech such as backbiting as it only takes a single evil word to cause someone to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

In addition, a Muslim should avoid all vain and useless speech as this only wastes one's precious time which will be a great regret for them on Judgment Day. In addition, vain speech is often the first step before sinful speech therefore, it is best to avoid it. One should either speak good or remain silent. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176.

The main Hadith under discussion also advises to safeguard oneself from consuming the unlawful. This will lead to all of one's righteous deeds being rejected irrespective of their intention. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

The second aspect of the main Hadith under discussion advises Muslims to safeguard their chastity meaning, avoid unlawful relationships. A Muslim has been given a way to achieving this namely, marriage. If a Muslim is not in the right position to get married, such as financially, then they should fast often as this reduces carnal desires. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1905.

Finally, as these two aspects combined lead to Paradise it is therefore the reason why getting married has been labeled completing half of one's faith in a Hadith found in Al Mu'jam Al Awsat, number 992

## **Acting on Divine Revelation**

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 12:

*"[Allah said], "O John [Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him], take the Scripture [i.e., adhere to it] with determination."..."*

Muslims must follow in his footsteps by holding onto the Holy Quran with firmness.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are

given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a Muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true Muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

## Strive for Wisdom

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 12:

*“...And We gave him [Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him] judgement [wisdom] [while yet] a boy.”*

It is important for Muslims to gain and act on useful knowledge as this is true wisdom and fine judgment. A wise person uses their knowledge so that it benefits them and others in both worlds. Knowledge by itself does not achieve this result. This is why there are plenty of people who possess much worldly and religious knowledge yet, are lost in misguidance as they do not apply their knowledge in the correct way. The best way to achieve this is to gain knowledge and apply it according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as no one has been granted such wisdom as him. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 2:

*“It is He who has sent among the unlettered [Arabs] a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book [i.e., the Quran] and wisdom [i.e., the Sunnah] - although they were before in clear error.”*

## **Divine Affection**

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verses 12-13:

*“...And We gave him [Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him]...affection from Us...”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7432, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves the servant who possesses the following characteristics. The first characteristic is piety. This means they strive to fulfill their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and they fulfill their duties towards people, such as striving in this world in order to obtain their necessities and the necessities of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being independent of the creation. This means that a Muslim should fully utilize the means they have been provided by Allah, the Exalted, such as their physical strength in order to fulfill their duties. They should not behave lazily and seek things from people as this habit leads to dependence on them and reduces trusting in Allah, the Exalted. One should firmly believe that no matter what happens whatever is destined to be their provision was allocated to them 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. A Muslim should focus on their efforts and trust that Allah, the Exalted, will grant them what is best for them.

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being anonymous. This means a Muslim should not strive in worldly or religious matters in order to obtain fame. As this can lead to many sins, such as showing off, and this only destroys one's reward. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that seeking fame is more destructive to one's religion than two wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. Instead, a Muslim should strive to fulfill their duties and if they become famous they must maintain sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, without altering their obedience to Him in order to please people as this leads to destruction in both worlds.



## Being Pious

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 13:

*“...and he [Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him] was fearing of Allah.”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious (fear Allah, the Exalted) until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful.

Piety can be summed up to mean fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, 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 includes treating others how one desires to be treated by people.

An aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things take a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful. And the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things and only uses lawful things will protect their religion and honor.

If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, it occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech meaning, speech which derives no benefit nor is it a sin, often leads to evil speech such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoided the first step by not indulging in vain speech they would avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to adopt piety as described earlier, a branch of which is to avoid vain and doubtful things out of fear they will lead to the unlawful.

## Kindness to Parents

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verses 13-14:

*“...and he [Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him] was...dutiful to his parents...”*

Being kind to parents is widely known characteristic amongst Muslims yet unfortunately many fail to fulfil this important duty. Allah, the Exalted, has placed being kind to parents next to solely worshipping Him in many places of the Holy Quran such as, chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 23:

*“And your Lord has decreed that you worship not except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], "uff,"<sup>1</sup> and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word.”*

In fact this same verse prohibits Muslims to even utter a single word out of annoyance towards their parents. In another place of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, has combined being grateful to Him with being grateful to parents. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 14:

*“...Be grateful to Me and to your parents...”*

Even though, there are countless Hadiths commanding treating parents kindly a single Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3662, is enough to understand its importance. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, answered someone who questioned what the rights of one's parents are by declaring that they are a child's Paradise or Hell. Meaning, if one treats their parents kindly for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they may well be admitted into Paradise because of it. But those who mistreat their parents may well be hurled into Hell because of it.

Even though, being obedient to parents, as long as it does not involve the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, is very difficult, especially, in this day and age Muslims should try to remain patient and not argue with their parents. If a Muslim disagrees with them they can and should still maintain respect for them at all times.

## Oppressive Behaviour

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verses 13-14:

*“...and he [Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him] was...he was not a disobedient tyrant.”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2447, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that oppression will become a darkness on the Day of Judgment.

This is vital to avoid as those who find themselves plunged in darkness are unlikely to find their way to Paradise. Only those who will be provided a guiding light will be able to do this successfully.

Oppression can take many forms. The first type is when one fails to fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. Even though this has no effect on the infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, it will cause the person to become submerged into darkness in both worlds. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, whenever a person commits a sin a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. The more they sin the more their heart will become encompassed by darkness. This will prevent them from accepting and following true

guidance in this world which will ultimately lead to darkness in the next world. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

*“No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning.”*

The next type of oppression is when one oppresses themselves by not fulfilling the trust they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, in the form of their body and other worldly blessings they possess. The greatest of which is one's faith. This must be protected and strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

The final type of oppression is when one mistreats others. Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive these sins until the oppressor's victim forgives them first. As people are not so merciful this is unlikely to happen. Then justice will be established on Judgment Day where the oppressor's righteous deeds will be given to their victim and if necessary the victim's sins will be given to the oppressor. This may lead to the oppressor being hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. One should therefore treat others how they wish to be treated by people. A Muslim should avoid all forms of oppression if they desire a guiding light in this world and in the next.

## Peace During Life

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 15:

*“And peace be upon him the day he [Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him] was born...”*

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

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

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more

targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a Muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.



## Peace in Death

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 15:

*“And peace be upon him [Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him]...the day he dies...”*

The only way one can obtain peace at the time of death is by correctly preparing for it before it occurs.

Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a Muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many Muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A Muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The

only way to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

## **Peace in Resurrection**

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 15:

*“And peace be upon him [Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him]...the day he is raised alive.”*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7232, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people will be resurrected on Judgment Day in the same state they died on Earth.

This means that if a person dies on good they will be resurrected on good. But if they die on evil they will be raised in an evil way.

A Muslim should not live in heedlessness by believing just because they have faith in Islam it guarantees they will die and therefore be raised in a good state on Judgment Day. If they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then die in this state without sincerely repenting then they will be raised in an evil way. It does not take a scholar to determine what will happen to this person on Judgment Day.

From this Hadith one can understand that the way they will die will be in the same state they have lived. Meaning, if they lived in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will die in a good state and therefore be raised in a good state which includes being raised with the righteous as they practically followed in their footsteps. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

A Muslim should therefore not walk the path to Hell by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and believe that they will somehow be raised with the pious and end up in Paradise.

## **Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him**

### **Protection from the Devil**

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 36:

*“...and I seek refuge for her in You and [for] her descendants [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] from Satan, the expelled.”*

It is important to understand that no matter how much religious knowledge one obtains or how much worship and righteous deeds they perform they will never be safe from the attacks and traps of the Devil. This is because the Devil attacks each person according to how much knowledge they possess and how much righteous deeds they perform. For example, he will try to convince the Muslim who is strict in offering their obligatory prayers not to offer them in congregation at the Mosque or by convincing them to delay their obligatory prayers beyond their starting times as he knows he will not be able to convince them to completely abandon the obligatory prayers. Whereas, in respect to the Muslim who is struggling to establish their obligatory prayers he will attempt to convince them that they are too difficult to establish therefore they should only offer them when they are completely free. He tries to convince those who perform many voluntary righteous deeds not to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to improve their character so that they continue to destroy their good deeds through bad characteristics such as, lying and backing.

The Devil aims to prevent a person from reaching a higher level if he cannot convince them to fall in rank through disobedience to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims should always be on guard against his attacks and traps by persistently striving to increase in rank, improve their character and avoid acts of disobedience which is all achieved by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

## Where Honor Lies

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 45:

*“...whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary - honored in this world...”*

Honor and true success are not connected to worldly things, such as wealth or fame. A person may obtain some worldly success through these things but it is quite obvious if one turns the pages of history that this type of success is very temporary and it eventually becomes a burden and regret for a person. A Muslim should never believe that superiority lies in these things thereby dedicating themselves to obtaining them while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Nor should they look down at others who do not possess these worldly things believing they have no value or significance as this attitude contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6071, that the people of Paradise are those who are considered insignificant by society and concluded that if they took an oath on something Allah, the Exalted, would fulfil it for them.

True honour, success and greatness in this world and the next only lies in piety. So the more one sincerely strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings be upon him, the greater they are even if they appear insignificant to society. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat verse 13:

*“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”*

A Muslim should therefore search for true success in this and not waste their time and efforts in searching for it in worldly things otherwise they may well reach the hereafter a great loser. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

*“Say, “Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.””*



## **Brought Near**

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 45:

*“...whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary...among those brought near [to Allāh].”*

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 a Muslim can only draw close to Him through fulfilling their obligatory duties. And they can achieve the love of Allah, the Exalted, through voluntary righteous deeds.

This description splits the servants of Allah, the Exalted, into two categories. The first group draws near to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer, and in respect to people, such as the obligatory charity. This can be summed up by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

The second category of those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, are superior to the first group as they not only fulfil their obligatory duties but strive in voluntary righteous deeds. This clearly shows that this is the only path to the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

Whoever takes a path other than this will not achieve this vital goal. This completely rejects the concept of obtaining sainthood without striving in obedience to Allah, the Exalted. The person who claims this is simply a liar. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body becomes pure. This leads to righteous deeds. So if a person does not perform righteous deeds, such as their obligatory duties, then their body is impure which means their spiritual heart is impure as well. This person can never reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, the greatest voluntary righteous deeds one can perform are those based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anyone who chooses to perform voluntary righteous deeds not based on his traditions has been fooled by the Devil as no path will take one close to Allah, the Exalted, except the path and actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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....”*

The pious Muslims who belong in the second higher group are also those who avoid unnecessary things of this material world. This attitude aids them in focusing their efforts on performing voluntary righteous deeds. It is this group who have perfected their faith by loving, hating, giving and withholding all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds Allah, the Exalted, 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.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this Muslim's supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.

## Useful Knowledge

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 46:

*“He [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] will speak to the people in the cradle...”*

Unfortunately, some have abandoned warning mankind of the mistakes of the past nations and how they were destroyed as a result of them. Instead, they inflate the concept of wishful thinking in respect to the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, by telling stories about saints and their miracles without teaching the audience how to follow in their footsteps and achieve sainthood. These inviters to Islam give the false impression salvation lies in attending a weekly religious gathering and only declaring one’s love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the saints through words without supporting it with action. They adopt this behavior as they believe becoming a popular speaker is more important than fulfilling the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. Chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 1-2:

*“O you who covers himself [with a garment]. Arise and warn.”*

Every Islamic discourse should deliver a concise and useful message. Unfortunately, some only attend gatherings which are composed of storytelling with no real purpose and meaning. These gatherings are

only held in order to please the masses with flowery but meaningless speech. Some lecturers incorrectly believe they must provide their listeners with hours' worth of information in order to achieve success. But they fail to realize a few good words which inspire the audience towards improvement is much better. A gathering is only useful when the audience leaves with the sincere intention to reform themselves. But this requires the one who desires to spread the word of faith to turn away from the incorrect attitude of searching for new ideas and concepts before acting on the basics.

## **Facing Trials**

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 46:

*“He [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] will speak to the people...in maturity...”*

This indicates the time when the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, will return to Earth towards the end of time and one of his missions will be to defeat the Anti-Christ. The trial of the Anti-Christ has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4077, as the greatest trial Muslims will face during their lives on Earth. Therefore, Muslims should learn some important lessons from this future event. The first is the importance of possessing strong faith. Only those who possess weak faith will be misguided by him. Strong faith is extremely important as it is a weapon against every trial or difficulty one faces during their life. The one who possesses strong faith will always, through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, overcome every difficulty with reward and the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, as they understand the behaviour they must demonstrate in each situation. Whereas, those who possess weak faith are easily misguided and put off from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by the tests and trials they face during their life just like the people of weak faith will be misguided by the Anti-Christ. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

*“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge.<sup>1</sup> 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.”*

The best way to achieve strong faith is through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. This will allow a Muslim to understand the reason and wisdom of tests and trials. This in turn will allow them to overcome them successfully.

The other thing to learn from this great event is the importance of avoiding doubtful things. Just like a person who journeys close to a border is more likely to cross it similarly, a Muslim who is surrounded by temptations will more likely be led astray. The one who avoids places and things which tempt them towards sins will protect their faith and honour. This advice has been given in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. Muslims should therefore guard their faith by avoiding things, places and people who invite or tempt them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and ensure their dependents, such as their children do the same.



## Faith and Deeds

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 46:

*“He [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him]...will be of the righteous.”*

Righteousness involves belief supported by good deeds and abstaining from sins.

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.

## Learning the Law

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 48:

*“And He will teach him [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] the Book [the Law]...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the lawful and unlawful have been made clear by Islam. In between them are doubtful things which should be avoided in order to protect one's faith and honor.

The vast majority of Muslims are aware of the obligatory duties and the majority of unlawful things, such as drinking alcohol. So these create no doubt within Muslims therefore they should act accordingly. Meaning, fulfil the obligatory duties and abstain from the unlawful according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. All other things which are not obligatory and create a doubt in society should therefore be avoided. Allah, the Exalted, will not question why someone did not perform a voluntary deed instead He will ask why they performed a voluntary deed. Therefore, leaving the voluntary action will have no consequences in the hereafter whereas performing a voluntary deed will namely, punishment, reward or forgiveness. It is important for Muslims to act on this short but extremely important Hadith as it will solve and prevent many problems and debates. It is important

to understand that when one indulges in doubtful or even vain things it will take them one step closer to the unlawful. For example, sinful speech is often preceded by vain and useless speech. Therefore, it is much safer for a Muslim's faith and honor to avoid doubtful and vain things.

## Learning Wisdom

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 48:

*“And He will teach him [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him]...wisdom...”*

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. This is in fact the wisdom mentioned in this verse.

## Obeying Prophethood

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 49:

*“And [make Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] a messenger to the Children of Israel...”*

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is for them to be sincerely obeyed and followed. 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 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.



## **Ease and Good Tidings**

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 50:

*“[Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, said]...and [I have come] to make lawful for you some of what was forbidden to you...”*

The Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, made certain prohibited things lawful for the children of Israel in order to make things easier for them. Similarly, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, have been granted to the mankind to make things easier for them.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6125, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to make things easy for others instead of making things difficult. And to give glad tidings to others and not scare them.

A Muslim should always make things easy firstly for themselves by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they can fulfill their obligatory duties, act on the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents. This will provide them with plenty of time to enjoy

lawful things without being wasteful or extravagant. A Muslim should act according to their strength in respect to voluntary righteous deeds and not over burden themselves as this is disliked in Islam. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465. A balanced approach is always best.

In addition, Muslims should make things easy for others especially, in religious matters so that people do not grow averse to Islam believing it is a burdensome religion when it in fact is a simple and easy religion. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287. This is important to teach others, especially children. If children wrongfully believe Islam is a difficult religion they will turn away from it when they get older. Children should be taught that Islam has some obligations which do not take much time to fulfill and leaves plenty of time for them to have fun in good ways.

But it is important to note, making things easy for oneself or others in religious matters does not mean a Muslim should be lazy and teach others to be lazy as the minimum obligations must be fulfilled at all times unless one is exempt by Islam. The one who acts lazily is not obeying Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires.

Another aspect of making things easy for others includes a Muslim not demanding their full rights from others. Instead, they should use the means, such as their physical or financial strength, to help themselves and make things easy for others. In some cases, failing to fulfill the rights of others can lead to punishment. In order to make things easy for others a Muslim should therefore only demand their rights in some cases. This does not mean a Muslim should not strive to fulfill the rights of others but

it means they should try to overlook and excuse the people they have rights over. For example, a parent can excuse their adult child from a particular house chore and do it themselves if they possess the means to do so without trouble especially if their child returns home from work exhausted. This leniency and mercy will not only cause Allah, the Exalted, to be more merciful to them but it will also increase the love and respect people have for them. The one who always demands their full rights is not a sinner but they will lose out on this reward and outcome if they behave in this manner.

Muslims should make things easy for others and hope Allah, the Exalted, will make things easy for them in this world and in the next. But those who make things difficult for others may find that Allah, the Exalted, makes things difficult for them in both worlds.

A Muslim must remind themselves and others of the countless blessings of Allah, the Exalted, and the great reward He bestows on Muslims in this world and in the next on those who obey Him by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This approach, in most cases, is more effective in encouraging people towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Only in some cases when someone is indulging in wishful thinking and disobeying Allah, the Exalted, while expecting they will succeed should a Muslim warn them of the consequences of their actions thereby, inspiring the fear of Allah, the Exalted, in them.

A balance is best whereby one uses hope in Allah, the Exalted, to encourage His obedience and fear of Him in order to prevent sins. And

whenever one feels imbalanced or observes others who have become imbalanced a Muslim should act appropriately in order to adjust themselves and others back to the correct middle path.

## Lord of Mankind

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 51:

*“[Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, said] Indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is the straight path.”*

This verse is connected to chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

*“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware."”*

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all Muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with

patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a Muslim has a choice between pleasing Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows Muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for Muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters

otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments, enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person's heart indicates that it is a duty on Muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a Muslim. Certainty of faith allows a Muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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...”*

## Support of Allah, the Exalted

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 52:

*“...he [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] said, "Who are my supporters for [the cause of] Allah?" The disciples said, "We are supporters for Allah..."”*

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.

## Possessing Belief

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 52:

*“...The disciples [of Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] said, “...We have believed in Allah...””*

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.

## Characteristics of Belief

The next discussion is based on in chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 52:

*“...The disciples [of Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] said, “...We...testify that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].””*

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true Muslim and a true believer. A true Muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A Muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a Muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a Muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

## Protection from All

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 55:

*“[Mention] when Allah said, "O Jesus, indeed I will take you and raise you to Myself and purify [i.e., free] you from those who disbelieve...””*

This mentions when the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was raised to the Heavens while alive. He achieved this protection and support from Allah, the Exalted, against his enemies as he remained firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

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.”*

## **A Simple Point**

The next discussion is based on chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 59:

*“Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created him from dust; then He said to him, “Be,” and he was.”*

This verse indicates a simple but profound lesson namely, some wrongfully believe that the Holy Prophet Isa, peace be upon him, is the son of God as he has no human father. But if this was the criterion for linking him to Allah, the Exalted, then the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, is more fitting for this claim as he has no human father or mother. Reflecting on this verse alone is enough to understand the truth namely, the Holy Prophet Isa, peace be upon him, is a righteous servant, Messenger and Holy Prophet of Allah, the Exalted.

## Slavery

The next discussion is based on chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 172:

*“Never would the Messiah [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] disdain to be a servant of Allah...”*

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

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

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

## **Blessings of Divine Revelation**

The next discussion is based on chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 172:

*“And We sent, following in their footsteps, Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah; and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light and confirming that which preceded it of the Torah as guidance and instruction for the righteous.”*

In this age, the Holy Quran is the divine revelation which fulfils all the aspects mentioned in this verse. But Muslims will only benefit from it after they fulfill its rights.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

*“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”*

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a Muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true Muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with

many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.



## Remembering Favors

The next discussion is based on chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 110:

*"[The Day] when Allah will say, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, remember My favor upon you..."*

Correctly remembering the favors of Allah, the Exalted, involves showing gratitude for them.

A Muslim must ensure they fulfill all three aspects of gratitude so that they avoid becoming a denier of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who is ungrateful in reality, scorns the One who granted them the blessings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

*"...And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me."*

The three aspects of gratitude are to internally acknowledge Allah, the Exalted, as the sole Creator and Provider of all blessings. An aspect of this

is to correct one's intention so that they only perform actions to please Allah, the Exalted. The next aspect is to praise Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue. And the final and highest aspect is to practically show gratitude through one's actions by using each blessing as prescribed by Islam in order to please 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]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'”*

As true gratitude leads to an increase in blessings Muslims should fear that showing ingratitude may cause the blessings they possess to either be taken away from them or for their blessings to be used against them by becoming a burden and a curse for them in both worlds. It is important to note, even if a Muslim becomes truly grateful they will still face tests and difficulties as they are guaranteed. But if they behave in the correct way they will be guided through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and body in this world and a great reward in the hereafter.

## **Worshipping on the Edge**

The next discussion is based on chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 112:

*"[And remember] when the disciples said, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, can your Lord send down to us a table [spread with food] from the heaven?" [Jesus] said, "Fear Allāh, if you should be believers.""*

The Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, warned his disciples that true belief involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and not demanding things from Him. This was the behaviour of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who put aside their own desires and simply submitted to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 285:

*"...And they say, "We hear and we obey...."*

It is important for Muslims to recognize why they worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him

they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. 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 disobedience]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”*

As they obey Allah, the Exalted, in order to receive worldly blessings the moment they fail to receive them or encounter a difficulty they often become angered which turns them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. These people often obey and disobey Allah, the Exalted, according to the situation they are facing which in reality contradicts true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though, desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, is acceptable in Islam yet, if one persists with this attitude they may become like those mentioned in this verse. It is far better to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to be saved in the hereafter and obtain Paradise. This person is unlikely to alter their behaviour when encountering difficulties. But the highest and best reason is to obey Allah, the Exalted, simply because He is their Lord and the Lord of the universe. This Muslim, if sincere, will remain steadfast in all situations and through this obedience they will be granted both worldly and religious blessings which outstrip the worldly blessings the first type of person would ever receive.

To conclude, it is important for Muslims to reflect on their intention and if necessary correct it so that it encourages them to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in all situations.

## Being Honest to Others

The next discussion is based on chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 116:

*“And [beware the Day] when Allāh will say, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as deities besides Allāh?" He will say, "Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right..."”*

Some have adopted a strange attitude. When they are questioned about things they are unaware of instead of admitting the truth they give a reply which has little or no foundation in the truth. This can become a serious issue especially in matters connected to Islam. A Muslim may get punished for giving incorrect information which others act on. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. This is because they ignorantly attributed things to Allah, the Exalted, or the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Because of these people strange beliefs and customs have become attached to Islam which is a great deviation from the truth brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, many of the cultural customs Muslims have adopted believing them to be a part of Islam occurred because of this ignorant mentality.

These people believe that if they simply admit they do not know something they will appear foolish to others. This mentality in itself is extremely foolish as the righteous predecessors would stress the importance of admitting one's ignorance so that others do not become misguided. In fact, the righteous predecessors would only count the person who behaved in this manner as an intelligent person and counted the one who answered every question posed to them a fool.

This attitude is often observed in elders who often advise their children on issues relating to the world and religion instead of admitting their ignorance and directing them to someone who knows the truth. When elders act in this way they fail their duty in rightly guiding their dependents which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

Muslims should therefore, gain correct knowledge, whether worldly or religious, before advising others and in cases they are unaware of something they should admit it as this will not reduce their rank in anyway. If anything Allah, the Exalted, and people will appreciate their honesty.

## **A Blessed Life**

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 31:

*“[Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, said] And He has made me blessed wherever I am...”*

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 affect 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.

## A Good Death

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 33:

*“[Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, said] And peace is on me the...day I will die...”*

The only way one can obtain peace at the time of death is by correctly preparing for it before it occurs.

Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a Muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many Muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A Muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The only way to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

## **A Blessed Return**

The next discussion is based on chapter 19 Maryam, verse 33:

*"[Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, said] And peace is on me the...day I am raised alive."*

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7232, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people will be resurrected on Judgment Day in the same state they died on Earth.

This means that if a person dies on good they will be resurrected on good. But if they die on evil they will be raised in an evil way.

A Muslim should not live in heedlessness by believing just because they have faith in Islam it guarantees they will die and therefore be raised in a good state on Judgment Day. If they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then die in this state without sincerely repenting then they will be raised in an evil way. It does not take a scholar to determine what will happen to this person on Judgment Day.

From this Hadith one can understand that the way they will die will be in the same state they have lived. Meaning, if they lived in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will die in a good state and therefore be raised in a good state which includes being raised with the righteous as they practically followed in their footsteps. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

A Muslim should therefore not walk the path to Hell by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and believe that they will somehow be raised with the pious and end up in Paradise.

## Kindness

The next discussion is based on chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 27:

*“...And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him [Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] compassion and mercy...”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters.

This is an important characteristic which must be adopted by all Muslims. It should be used in all aspects of one's life. It is important to understand that being gentle benefits the Muslim themselves more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and minimize the amount of sins they commit, as a gentle person is less likely to commit sins through their speech and actions, but it benefits them in worldly affairs also. For example, the person who treats their spouse gently will gain more love and respect in return than if they treated their spouse in a harsh manner. Children are more likely to obey and treat their parents with respect when they are treated gently. Colleagues at work are more likely to help the one who is gentle with them. The examples are endless. Only in very rare cases is a harsh attitude required. In most cases, gentle behaviour will be much more effective than a harsh attitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possesses countless good qualities yet, Allah, the exalted, specifically highlighted his gentleness in the Holy Quran as it is a key ingredient required to affect others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Al Imran, verse 159:

*“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”*

A Muslim must remember that they will never be better than a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, nor will the person they interact with be worse than Pharaoh yet, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Musa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them, to deal with Pharaoh in a kind manner. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 44:

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

Therefore, a Muslim should adopt gentleness in all affairs as it leads to much reward and affects others, such as one's family, in a positive way.

## Detachment

The next discussion is based on chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 27:

*“...and monasticism, which they [followers of the Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allah. But they did not observe it with due observance...”*

They failed to live up to monasticism correctly as they turned this into a physical thing by disconnecting from their responsibilities and the physical world. Whereas, Islam teaches a spiritual detachment instead of a physical one.

The material world which one should detach from actually refers to one's desires. It does not refer to the physical world, such as the mountains. This is indicated by chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 14:

*“Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle*



*and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return [i.e., Paradise].”*

These things are connected to the desires of people and by them one becomes distracted from preparing for the hereafter. When one abstains from their desires they are in fact detaching from the material world. This is why a Muslim who does not possess worldly things can still be regarded a worldly person because of their inner desire and love for it. Whereas, a Muslim who possesses worldly things, like some of the righteous predecessors, can be considered detached from the material world as they do not desire and occupy their minds, hearts and actions with them. Instead they desire lies in the eternal hereafter.

The righteous predecessors understood why Allah, the Exalted, created them and what He desired from them. So they only spent wealth according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and never spent on things according to their own desires. These righteous people were certain that their souls and possessions belonged only to Allah, the Exalted. So they reached the highest level of gratitude by using each worldly blessing according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. These people may have been given plenty of worldly things but they did not put their trust in them. They only put their trust in Allah, the Exalted. They took no pleasure in their belongings and only saw them as a duty which needed to be discharged according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Their hearts were not attached to their belongings nor did they exclude others from enjoying the worldly blessings they possessed by greedily hoarding them. This is why they possessed worldly things but the things did not possess them. They had wealth but chose poverty for themselves as they spent to fulfil the needs of others. They took delight only in the obedience of Allah, the

Exalted, by using their worldly possessions according to His wish instead of their own. Neither did they grieve or show displeasure when they lost worldly things as they preferred the choice of Allah, the Exalted, over all things. They took no pleasure or joy in their worldly possessions. So in reality, they had abstained from the material world even though they possessed worldly things. The possessions were in their hands not in their hearts. They understood that the true love of Allah, the Exalted, consisted of turning away from this material world with their hearts and intentions. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 131:

*“And do not extend your eyes toward that by which We have given enjoyment to [some] categories of them, [its being but] the splendor of worldly life by which We test them. And the provision of your Lord is better and more enduring.”*

## **Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him**

Some vital lessons from the blessed life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has been compiled in a separate free eBook titled: Life of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), and it can be directly accessed using the following link:

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:36485464-7415-30b5-bbca-3cb7616d24e1>

But to conclude, out of all the blessed aspects of the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Allah, the Exalted, repeatedly highlighted his noble character throughout the Holy Quran. For example, chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

*“And indeed, you are of a great moral character.”*

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with

patience. It also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many Muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly they must also treat others with good character otherwise they will not succeed as the only truly successful people are the believers.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be rewarded like the Muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

## **Conclusion**

Every Muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, yet they barely know them as they are too busy to study their lives, characters and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the lives, characters and teachings of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and supported their claim through actions by following in their footsteps. This is why they will be with them in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their

mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

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