

Protection Against the Dajjal

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Achieve Noble Character

Protection Against the Dajjal

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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.

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Compiler's Notes

We have tried diligently to do justice in this volume however if there are any short falls found then the compiler is personally and solely responsible for them.

We accept the possibility of faults and shortcomings in an effort to complete such a difficult task. We might have unconsciously stumbled and committed errors for which we ask for indulgence and forgiveness of our readers and the drawing of our attention thereto will be appreciated. We earnestly invite constructive suggestions which can be made to ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com.

Introduction

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1883, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever memorizes the first ten verses of chapter 18 Al Kahf of the Holy Quran will be protected from the tribulation of the Dajjal (Anti-Christ). The following short book therefore discusses these verses in order to complement its memorization.

“[All] praise is [due] to Allah, who has sent down upon His servant the Book and has not made therein any deviance. [He has made it] straight, to warn of severe punishment from Him and to give good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a good reward. In which they will remain forever. And to warn those who say, "Allah has taken a son." They have no knowledge of it, nor had their fathers. Grave is the word that comes out of their mouths; they speak not except a lie. Then perhaps you would kill yourself through grief over them, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], if they do not believe in this message, out of sorrow. Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed. And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground. Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder? [Mention] when the youths retreated to the cave and said, "Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy and prepare for us from our affair right guidance." So We cast [a cover of sleep] over their ears within the cave for a number of years. Then We awakened them that We might show which of the two factions was most precise in calculating what [extent] they had remained in time.”

Implementing the lessons discussed will aid a Muslim to Achieve Noble Character. According to the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that the heaviest thing in the Scales of Judgment Day will be Noble Character. It is one of qualities of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which Allah, the Exalted, complimented in Chapter 68 Al Qalam, Verse 4 of the Holy Quran:

“And indeed, you are of a great moral character.”

Therefore, it is a duty on all Muslims to gain and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to Achieve Noble Character.

Protection Against the Dajjal

Chapter 18 - Al Kahf, Verses 1-5

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا ۝١

فِيمَا لِيُنذِرَ بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا مِمَّنْ لَدُنْهُ وَيُبَشِّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ

يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا ۝٢

مَّا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا ۝٣

وَيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا ۝٤

مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ

أَفْوَاهِهِمْ إِن يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا ۝٥

“[All] praise is [due] to Allah, who has sent down upon His servant the Book and has not made therein any deviance.

[He has made it] straight, to warn of severe punishment from Him and to give good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a good reward.

In which they will remain forever.

And to warn those who say, "Allah has taken a son."

They have no knowledge of it, nor had their fathers. Grave is the word that comes out of their mouths; they speak not except a lie."

“[All] praise is [due] to Allah...”

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is praised by His self-praise and by the praise of His creation. This also means that Allah, the Exalted, is the One who praises His righteous servants and handsomely rewards them for their efforts.

The muslim who understands this divine name will be far too busy in praising and obeying Allah, the Exalted, to praise himself and to worry about their rights. This will keep them away from pride which is a characteristic that leads to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

A muslim must act on this divine name by only performing praiseworthy actions and adopting a praiseworthy character. This is arguably the greatest tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

“And indeed, you are of a great moral character.”

“[All] praise is [due] to Allah...”

All praise is only for Allah, the Exalted, as He created and continuously sustains the entire creation within the Heavens and Earth without any progeny, partner, or helper. His kindness in the form of countless blessings, such as faith, to the creation has no limits. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 18:

"And if you should count the favors of Allah, you could not enumerate them...."

Therefore, the creation should constantly praise Him through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Allah, the Exalted, is worthy of all praise, as He is full of perfection in terms of attributes and characteristics which are free from all shortcomings. This is still true even if He did not bestow any blessings on the creation. In addition, praising Allah, the Exalted, with the tongue and actions through sincere obedience is a means to increase the blessings one receives. 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 praise Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible as it is has been declared the best supplication by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3800. In addition, this verse reminds mankind that whatever praise-worthy quality a person observes in the creation or within themselves is only possible because Allah, the Exalted, granted it. Therefore, all praise returns and solely belongs to Allah, the Exalted.

“[All] praise is [due] to Allah, who has sent down upon His servant the Book...”

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 Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with it. This has been indicated in 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.”

“[All] praise is [due] to Allah, who has sent down upon His servant the Book and has not made therein any deviance.”

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. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 23:

“And if you are in some doubt, concerning what We sent down upon Our special devotee, then bring one chapter like it, and call upon all your helpers beside Allah, if you are truthful.”

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.

When studying the Holy Quran one will realize that it contains different levels of superiority through both obvious and subtle meanings that it discusses. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 1:

“...[This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise and Aware.”

The expressions in it are unparalleled and its meanings are explained in a simple straight forward way. Its verses are extremely eloquent and no other text can surpass it. The Holy Quran also mentioned the stories of the previous nations in detail even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not educated in history. It commanded every type of good and forbade every type of evil, those that affect an individual and those that affect an entire society so that peace and security can spread throughout homes and society. The Holy Quran is free from exaggerations, lies or falsehood unlike poems and stories. All the verses, whether short or long, in the Holy Quran are beneficial. Even when the same story is repeated in the Holy Quran different important lessons can be learned from it. Unlike all other books the Holy Quran does not become boring when it is repeatedly recited and a seeker of truth never gets fed up of studying it. The Holy Quran not only provides warnings and promises but supports them with unshakeable and clear proofs. When the Holy Quran discusses anything which can seem abstract, such as adopting patience, it always provides an easy and practical way of implementing it. It encourages one to fulfil the purpose of their creation and prepare for the eternal hereafter in a simple yet profound way. It makes the straight path clear and appealing to the one who desires true success in both worlds. The knowledge within it is timeless and can be applied to every society and age. It is a healing for every emotional, economical and physical difficulty when it is understood and applied correctly. It is the cure for every problem an individual or an entire society can ever encounter. One only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the societies which implemented the teachings of the Holy Quran correctly in order to understand its all encompassing benefits. Centuries have passed yet not even a single letter has been edited in the Holy Quran as Allah, the Exalted, promised to safeguard it. No other book in history possesses this quality. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 9:

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [i.e., the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian.”

This is undoubtedly the greatest and timeless miracle of Allah, the Exalted, granted to His final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But the only one who will benefit from it is the one who seeks the truth whereas the seekers of their desires will only find it difficult to hear and follow. 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.”

“[All] praise is [due] to Allah, who has sent down upon His servant the Book and has not made therein any deviance. [He has made it] straight, to warn of severe punishment from Him and to give good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a good reward.”

One will only avoid all forms of deviance from the right path, deviances which lead to punishment in both worlds, and obtain the right path and success in both worlds when they sincerely follow and obey the two sources of guidance mentioned in these verses.

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.

“...Allah, who has sent down upon His servant the Book and has not made therein any deviance. [He has made it] straight, to warn of severe punishment from Him and to give good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a good reward.”

These verses indicate 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.

“[He has made the Quran] straight, to warn of severe punishment from Him and to give good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a good reward.”

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.

“[He has made the Quran] straight, to warn of severe punishment from Him and to give good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a good reward.”

Righteousness 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 righteous 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 righteousness 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.

“[He has made the Quran] straight, to warn of severe punishment from Him and to give good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a good reward.”

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

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.

“[He has made the Quran] straight, to warn of severe punishment from Him and to give good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a good reward.”

This verse differentiates between having hope in Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And

whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

A specific type of wishful thinking which affected the past nations and even the muslim nation is when a person believes that they can ignore the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, and somehow someone on the Day of Judgement will intercede for them and save them from Hell. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact and has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less even with his intercession some muslims whose punishment will be reduced by it will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil convinces those who do not believe in Judgement Day that even if it occurs they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on that day by claiming that they were not so bad as they avoided major crimes such as murder. They have convinced themselves that their pleas will be accepted and they will be sent to Paradise even though they disbelieved in Allah, the

Exalted, during their lives on Earth. This is incredibly foolish as Allah, the Exalted, will not treat the person who believed in Him and tried to obey him like the one who disbelieved in Him. A single verse has erased this type of wishful thinking. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”

“[He has made the Quran] straight, to warn of severe punishment from Him and to give good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a good reward.”

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.

“[He has made the Quran] straight, to warn of severe punishment from Him and to give good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a good reward.”

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.

“[He has made the Quran] straight, to warn of severe punishment from Him and to give good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a good reward.”

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.

“[He has made the Quran] straight, to warn of severe punishment from Him and to give good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a good reward. In which they will remain forever.”

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.

“And [the Quran was sent] to warn those who say, “Allāh has taken a son”. They have no knowledge of it, nor had their fathers. Grave is the word that comes out of their mouths; they speak not except a lie.”

The main reasons for the spread of the false beliefs regarding the Holy Prophet Eesa, were his miraculous birth, the miracles which he performed and his ascension into Heaven while alive. The Holy Quran confirms the miraculous birth of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and proves that his fatherless birth was a sign of the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 47:

“She [Maryam, may Allah be pleased with her] said, “My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me?” [The angel] said, “Such is Allāh; He creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”

This miraculous birth does not prove that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine. It only indicates the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. 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 Eesa, 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 Eesa, peace be upon him, is a righteous servant, Messenger and Holy Prophet of Allah, the Exalted.

The miracles of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, are also verified by the Holy Quran. It however makes it clear that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, performed these miracles with the will, permission and command of Allah, the Exalted. If the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine he would not need the will or permission of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 49:

“And [make the Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] a messenger to the Children of Israel, [who will say], 'Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allāh. And I cure the blind [from birth] and the leper, and I give life to the dead - by permission of Allāh. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses...”

The ascension of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, to the Heavens while alive further indicates the power of Allah, the Exalted, as He took the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, on this journey. If the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine he could have undertaken this journey with his own innate power. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 55:

“[Mention] when Allāh said, "O Jesus, indeed I will take you and raise you to Myself and purify [i.e., free] you from those who disbelieve...””

The Holy Quran tells the Christians that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, contrary to their belief, was not crucified. The one whose image was seen on the cross was not the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, but someone who was made to look like him. Allah, the Exalted, had already raised the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, towards Heaven by this time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verses 156-158:

“And for their disbelief and their saying against Mary a great slander. And [for] their saying, "Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the messenger of Allāh." And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them...Rather, Allāh raised him to Himself.”

The incorrect Christian belief of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, being crucified meaning, killed, is strange in itself as a real divine

being is far beyond experiencing death. So in reality, their incorrect belief in his death by crucifixion negates their incorrect belief in his divinity by itself.

Finally, a divine being by nature is something which is self-sustaining meaning, they do not need someone else to sustain them. If a being is sustained by another then they cannot be divine. Both the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and his mother, Maryam, may Allah be pleased with her, were not divine beings as they required nourishment from Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they were not self-sustaining beings. In addition, no one can claim that as the Angels do not eat they can be considered divine, such as the non-muslims of Mecca believed. In reality, they are also sustained by Allah, the Exalted, in a different way so they too are not self-sustaining. The fact that they have been created and will experience death, just like the rest of creation, is enough to negate divinity.

“And [the Quran was sent] to warn those who say, “Allāh has taken a son”. They have no knowledge of it, nor had their fathers. Grave is the word that comes out of their mouths; they speak not except a lie.”

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.

“And [the Quran was sent] to warn those who say, “Allāh has taken a son”. They have no knowledge of it, nor had their fathers. Grave is the word that comes out of their mouths; they speak not except a lie.”

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.

“And [the Quran was sent] to warn those who say, “Allāh has taken a son”. They have no knowledge of it, nor had their fathers. Grave is the word that comes out of their mouths; they speak not except a lie.”

These verses also criticise blindly following others, such as one’s elders.

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.

“And [the Quran was sent] to warn those who say, “Allāh has taken a son”. They have no knowledge of it, nor had their fathers. Grave is the word that comes out of their mouths; they speak not except a lie.”

These verses also criticise blindly following others, such as one’s elders.

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.

“...Grave is the word that comes out of their mouths; they speak not except a lie.”

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.

“...Grave is the word that comes out of their mouths; they speak not except a lie.”

Lying is unacceptable whether it is a small lie which is often called a white lie or when one lies as a joke. All of these types of lies are forbidden. In fact, the one who lies to make people laugh, so their aim is not to deceive someone, has been cursed three times in one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315.

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

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

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

Telling lies which spread to others in society is a such a serious sin that according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7047, if a person does this and fails to repent they will be punished after their death to such an extent that an iron hook will be placed in their mouth and their facial skin will be torn off. Their face will regenerate instantly and the process will then be repeated. This will continuously occur until the Day of Judgment.

To conclude, all muslims should avoid all forms of lying irrespective of who they are conversing with.

Chapter 18 – Al Kahf, Verse 6

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَدِخٌ نَّفْسَكَ عَلَىٰ ءَاثَرِهِمْ إِن لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا

الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا ﴿٦﴾

“Then perhaps you would kill yourself through grief over them, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], if they do not believe in this message, out of sorrow.”

“Then perhaps you would kill yourself through grief over them, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], if they do not believe in this message, out of sorrow.”

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.

“Then perhaps you would kill yourself through grief over them, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], if they do not believe in this message, out of sorrow.”

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.

“Then perhaps you would kill yourself through grief over them, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], if they do not believe in this message, out of sorrow.”

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 fulfils 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.”

“Then perhaps you would kill yourself through grief over them, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], if they do not believe in this message, out of sorrow.”

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.

“Then perhaps you would kill yourself through grief over them, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], if they do not believe in this message, out of sorrow.”

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.

Chapter 18 – Al Kahf, Verses 7-8

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ

عَمَلًا ﴿٧﴾

وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرُزًا ﴿٨﴾

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed.

And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground.”

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed.

This verse mentions best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds.

Unfortunately, some muslims have adopted a weak characteristic which only hinders them from improving for the better. Namely, they compare their situation and circumstances to others who are facing easier circumstances and use this as an excuse not to 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. For example, a person who works full time excuses their lack of striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by comparing themselves to someone who works part time and simply claims it is easier for them to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, as they have more free time. Or a poorer muslim turns away from giving any form of charity by observing those who possess more wealth and claims that the wealthy person can more easily give charity than them. They fail to understand that these excuses may make their souls feel better but it does not aid them in this world or in the next. Allah, the Exalted, does not desire people to act according to the means of others He only desires people to act in His obedience according to their own means. For example, a person who works full time can dedicate whatever free time they possess in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even if that is less than someone who works part time. In this respect what the part timer does has no effect on the one who works full time so using them as an excuse not to strive harder is simply a lame excuse. The poor muslim should simply donate according to their means

even if that is much less than the wealthy person as Allah, the Exalted, will judge them on what they do and He will not judge them according to what other muslims do.

Muslims should give up these useless excuses and simply obey Allah, the Exalted, according to their own means.

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed.

This verse mentions best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. Best refers to being sincere to Allah, the Exalted.

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.

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed.

This verse mentions best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. Best refers to being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and acting according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one behaves in this manner the better their deeds.

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.

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed.

This verse mentions best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. Best refers to being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and acting according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one behaves in this manner the better their deeds.

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.

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed.

This verse mentions best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. Best refers to being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and acting according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one behaves in this manner the better their deeds.

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.

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed.

This verse mentions best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. Best refers to being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and acting according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one behaves in this manner the better their deeds.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

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.

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed.

This verse mentions best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. Best refers to being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and acting according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one behaves in this manner the better their deeds. Generally speaking, this involves using the blessings one has been granted 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.

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed.

This verse mentions best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. Best refers to being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and acting according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one behaves in this manner the better their deeds. Generally speaking, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

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.

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed.

This verse mentions best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. Best refers to being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and acting according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one behaves in this manner the better their deeds. Generally speaking, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

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.

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed.

This verse mentions best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. Best refers to being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and acting according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one behaves in this manner the better their deeds. Generally speaking, this involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. One can adopt this correct attitude when they understand the purpose of these blessings.

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.

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed. And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground.”

These verses mention best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. This could be referring to the one who is most detached from this temporary material world.

It is important to note, 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 first level of abstinence is turning away from unlawful and vain desires which are not connected to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This person busies themselves in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities all the while focusing on the hereafter. They turn away from things and people who prevent them from fulfilling this important deed.

The next stage of abstinence is when one takes only the things they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities. They do not occupy their time on things which will not derive them benefit in the next world. This is the advice given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. He advised a muslim to live in this material world as a stranger or a traveller. Both types of people will only take what they need from the material world in order to reach their destination meaning, the hereafter safely. A muslim can achieve this by understanding how close their death and departure to the hereafter is. Not only can death pounce on a person at any time but even if one lives a long life it seems as though it passed in a moment. By realising this reality one sacrifices the moment for the sake of the eternal hereafter. Shortening one's hope for a long life in this material world will encourage them to perform righteous deeds, sincerely repent from their sins and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over all else. The one who hopes for a long life will be inspired to behave in the opposite manner.

The one who is truly abstinent in the material world neither blames it nor praises it. They do not rejoice when they gain it nor do they grieve when it passes them by. The mind of this pious muslim is too focused on the eternal hereafter to greedily notice the small material world.

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed. And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground.”

These verses mention best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. This could be referring to the one who is most detached from this temporary material world.

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.”

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed. And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground.”

These verses mention best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. Best refers to being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and acting according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one behaves in this manner the better their deeds. Adopting the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter will aid one in acting in the correct way before their time runs out.

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...”

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed. And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground.”

These verses mention best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. Best refers to being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and acting according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one behaves in this manner the better their deeds. Adopting the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter will aid one in acting in the correct way before their time runs out.

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.

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed. And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground.”

These verses mention best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. Best refers to being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and acting according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one behaves in this manner the better their deeds. Adopting the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter will aid one in acting in the correct way before their time runs out.

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.

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed. And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground.”

These verses mention best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. Best refers to being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and acting according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one behaves in this manner the better their deeds. Adopting the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter will aid one in acting in the correct way before their time runs out.

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.

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed. And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground.”

These verses mention best in deed not the one who does the most good deeds. Best refers to being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and acting according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one behaves in this manner the better their deeds. Adopting the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter will aid one in acting in the correct way before their time runs out.

It is quite obvious when observing most people that they strive hard in order to beautify their material world. In fact, many go beyond this by striving to mould their life so that it becomes perfect and permanent. For example, people spend large amounts of money on trying to build the perfect home while hoping that it will endure. Companies make billions out of this desire of people to be perfect and timeless, such as cosmetic companies. Some people endure painful operations in an attempt to defy time and achieve perfection. This shows that there is something within a person's soul which desires perfection and permanence. But the strange thing is that no matter how much money one spends and no matter how much effort they dedicate these two things namely, perfection and permanence, are not obtainable in this world. This internal desire was placed inside people to make them strive for perfection and permanence in a place where they do exist namely, the hereafter.

Unfortunately, some misunderstood this desire and misplaced it. Muslims should therefore not make this mistake but instead place this desire in the correct place by striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Only then will they be able to fulfil this desire and achieve true perfection and permanence.

Chapter 18 – Al Kahf, Verses 9-12

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا



إِذْ أَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آئِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ

لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا

فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَى آذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ أَيُّ الْحَزِينِ أَحْصَى لِمَا لَبِثُوا أَمَدًا

“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder?”

[Mention] when the youths retreated to the cave and said, “Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy and prepare for us from our affair right guidance.”

So We cast [a cover of sleep] over their ears within the cave for a number of years.

Then We awakened them that We might show which of the two factions was most precise in calculating what [extent] they had remained in time.”

“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder?”

The signs of Allah, the Exalted, can only be appreciated and affect the behaviour of a person in a positive way when they strive to gain and act on Islamic knowledge.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder?”

The signs of Allah, the Exalted, can only be appreciated and affect the behaviour of a person in a positive way when they strive to gain and act on Islamic knowledge. This leads 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...”

“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder?”

Scholars have debated for many generations the finer details of the people of the cave, such as their names, how many they were, the location of the cave, etc. But the important thing to note, is that Muslims should never fall into arguments over this and similar issues to the point that it creates enmity between them. In addition, gaining knowledge on these things will not affect their faith and obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Neither will this be questioned about on the Day of Judgement by Allah, the Exalted, otherwise the Muslim nation would have been informed of this. So spending countless hours arguing, debating and publishing books discussing these issues does not make sense. Muslims should instead concentrate more on the things which when clarified will increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of 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 concentrate on those things which will be questioned about on Judgement Day, such as fulfilling the rights of people. Unfortunately, arguing and debating over these types of issues has distracted Muslims from concentrating on more important things and issues and this is one of the reasons why the general strength of the Muslim nation has declined over time.

This issue is connected to a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2518. It advises that a Muslim should leave a thing which creates doubt in them and act on the things which create no doubt in them. The vast majority of Muslims are aware of the obligatory duties and the majority of

the unlawful things, such as drinking alcohol. So these things create no doubt within Muslims therefore they should act accordingly meaning, fulfil the obligatory duties and abstain from unlawful things.

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 on Judgement Day. Instead, He will question 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. In fact, this is the advice given in another Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. It advises that both the lawful and unlawful things in Islam have been made clear to mankind and all other matters of voluntary actions which create doubt should be left aside. This attitude will protect one's religion and honour.

“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder?”

Scholars have debated for many generations the finer details of the people of the cave, such as their names, how many they were, the location of the cave, etc.

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.

“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder? [Mention] when the youths retreated to the cave and said, "Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy..."”

They retreated to the cave in order to safeguard their faith.

These verses therefore 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.

“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder? [Mention] when the youths retreated to the cave and said, "Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy..."”

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. In addition, the mercy they show should not be

selective or occasional instead they should strive to demonstrate mercy at all times with all of creation.

“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder? [Mention] when the youths retreated to the cave and said, "Our Lord, grant us from Yourself 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.

“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder? [Mention] when the youths retreated to the cave and said, "Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy and prepare for us from our affair right guidance."”

They retreated to the cave in order to safeguard their faith. They maintained sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, instead of compromising on their faith. This indicates that right guidance lies in 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.

“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder? [Mention] when the youths retreated to the cave and said, "Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy and prepare for us from our affair right guidance."”

They retreated to the cave in order to safeguard their faith. They maintained sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, instead of compromising on their faith. This indicates that right guidance lies in being sincere to Allah, the Exalted.

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

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

This muslim reaches the level of excellence which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when a muslim performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will guard their mind and body from sins. This is the

one who when they speak they speak for Allah, the Exalted, when they are silent they are silent for Allah, the Exalted. When they act they act for Him and when they are still they are for His sake. This is an aspect of monotheism and understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

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.

“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder? [Mention] when the youths retreated to the cave and said, "Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy and prepare for us from our affair right guidance."”

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.

“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder? [Mention] when the youths retreated to the cave and said, "Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy and prepare for us from our affair right guidance." So We cast [a cover of sleep] over their ears within the cave for a number of years.”

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 these youths. 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.

“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder? [Mention] when the youths retreated to the cave and said, "Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy and prepare for us from our affair right guidance." So We cast [a cover of sleep] over their ears within the cave for a number of years. Then We awakened them that We might show which of the two factions was most precise in calculating what [extent] they had remained in time.”

The signs of Allah, the Exalted, can only be appreciated and affect the behaviour of a person in a positive way when they strive to gain and act on Islamic knowledge.

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.

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